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STARBURST

RAIDERS
OF THE
LOST
ARK

FEATURING REVIEWS OF
TIME BANDITS,
FEAR NO EVIL,
FOR YOUR EYES ONLY

PLUS

BBC's DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS,
ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK,
THE HOWLING,
FLASH GORDON (1936)



TIME BANDITS

STARBURST REVIEWS
THE NEW ZANY FILM
FROM THE MONTY
PYTHON PEOPLE ON
PAGE 18.



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BUSTER FROM THE COMBINED
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CASTS A CRITICAL
EYE OVER THE NEW
OFFERING FROM
PETER (CAPRICORN
ONE) HYAMS, WHICH
STARS SEAN
CONNERY.
SEE PAGE 22.



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 John Fleming
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 Tise Vahimagi

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A Marvel Comics Production

STARBURST LETTERS

READER'S VERDICT BUT IS IT ART?

I feel I must write to congratulate you on the latest *Starburst* (issue 35). So, congratulations! I don't mind having to pay 70p for it now, the extra colour pages make it really worth it. Issue 35 is the best yet.

Thanks for showing us what the new Doctor Who looks like. Despite some criticisms I can't wait to see how Peter Davison interprets the role. This Doctor is a cricket fan, I believe.

I enjoyed the *Clash of the Titans* features and can't wait to see the film. While on the subject, I'd like to say that it's good to see a review with mention of what others thought of the film, as Phil Edwards did. It makes the review sound fairer.

Liked the pictures of Prunella Gee and Bo Derek (by the way, when are you doing your sequel to your *Fantasy Females* issue. It's long overdue!).

Liked the Convention Reports. Good idea!

Finally, like to make a general comment. You seem to avoid doing features on tv shows. You get round it by doing a bit on the writers for *Star Trek*, a chat with Gerry Anderson on *Space 1999* and one with Douglas Adams on *Hitch Hikers Guide*. How about doing full features on these shows, preferably in colour.

Anyway, don't lose your towel and keep up the good work.

David Jackson,
Morley,
Leeds.

Don't worry, Dave. We haven't forgotten about the *Fantasy Females*. Stick around! And on the subject of tv shows, *Tise Vahimagi* explains the problems that beset those who would write articles on the subject in this month's TV Zone column...

HORRORS!

I'm glad to see *Starburst* now gives more coverage to the horror genre. Your magazine is now one of the best on the market. But why not have a classified section? I'm sure this would prove to be a popular item.

John Connelly,
Herts.

As you may be aware, John, we now carry a classified section, usually on page 58...

Browsing through *Book World* in *Starburst* 35, I came across a mention of the British SF Awards. The *Best Artist* winner stopped me dead in my tracks. I mean, holy Belgium! Peter A. Jones as best artist? (Adolf Hitler as most liberal politician? Cyanide as the most popular seasoning?)

I suggest Jones' popularity is based on quantity rather than quality. He churns out the stuff with such unceasing regularity that his less prolific competitors can't get a brush stroke in edgewise. Not that his competitors are that good — only in comparison to his work.

Right now the only artist who would get my vote is No Award, whose outstanding work may be seen on the inside covers of thousands of paperback books. Now, if you'll excuse me, I think I'll go away and hide...

Life. Don't talk to me about life. Zootie murtle zootie murtle zootie murtle.

Lee Mendhem,
Chatham,
Kent.

Any members of The British Science Fiction Association or the Peter A. Jones Fan Club care to comment?

COMMENTS FROM THE RIM

Congratulations on *Starburst* 35 with its new look making for a better read than ever. The eight extra pages of colour are just what the magazine needed. I've always felt it a pity in the past that so many superb stills had to be printed in black and white, thus lessening their impact.

However, I must admit to being less than impressed by *Tales from the Rim*. Paul Neery's artwork is very pleasant to the eye but as sf satire it just doesn't work. It's a nice idea to have a comic strip in *Starburst*, but not *Tales from the Rim*. Having said that, perhaps I'm making my judgement too early, leaving Mr Neery's concept to become genuinely amusing and intelligent in later months. If that turns out to be the case, I apologise now!

The two reviews of *Excalibur* made fascinating contrasts in opinions, leaving one wondering whether the film really was worth seeing or not. In the end I put my

faith in Phil Edwards and risked the price of a cinema ticket. Nearly two and a half tedious hours later, I realised I had once again wronged John Brosnan! His review was as apt as usual and, despite all its rave reviews in the popular newspapers, *Excalibur* is an over-rated, spectacular bore. With *The Heretic* and *Zardoz* also to his name, I think I shall now steer clear of the films of John Boorman. His projects are usually ambitious but seldom successful.

Issue 35 was also enjoyable for its reports on a number of sf conventions. Cons are an important aspect of fandom but seldom warrant a mention in *Starburst*. Yet I for one would love to know all the goings on at any con I may have missed due to lack of time, money or whatever. So come on, guys, let's make *Convention Corner* a regular feature.

Paul Maledem,
Brunswick,
Manchester.

I am writing praising this new comic strip which has appeared, hurray! We have finally got one that's worth reading. The ones you used to have — no comment, but *Tales from the Rim* is really good. The art's good and so far I think it is quite witty. This could be a winner! Give Paul Neery 10 out of 10 and a pat on the back. I look forward to the next episode.

I really like the new look meg. Things seem to get better and better. Keep it up it gives us British sf fans something to be proud of.

David Howell,
Derlinton,
West Midlands.

QUATERMASS GAFF

Good to see an article involving the BBC *Quatermass* (TV Zone *Starburst* 35) which I found very interesting. Unfortunately I would like to point out a mistake about one of the photographs from *Quatermass and the Pit*. It is stated that the bottom left picture shows Captain Potter trying to pull Barbara Judd away from the "partly constructed tube station". Had this been a photograph from the film version this would have been totally correct. But in the series the space ship hull is found when the foundations for an office block are being dug. The only similarity between the two discoveries is that they are both made by archeologists who take over the

sites when prehistoric remains are uncovered. From my basic knowledge of the series I believe myself to be correct. And had I been writing the article, before reading the script from the series, I would probably have made the same mistake.

Nick Cooper,
Hull,
North Humberside.

Alan McKenzie replies: "In all fairness to *Tise Vahimagi*, I should point out that the mistake was mine and not *Tise*'s. Silly of me to assume that the tv version resembled the later Andrew Keir Hammer film in every detail..."

A READER STRIKES BACK

I felt, after much deliberation, that I had to write on correspondent Mark Marmor's "View from the U.S." in the letters section of *Starburst* 32. Rarely has a letter in this magazine so angered me — though I applaud Mr Marmor's intention of giving an issue-by-issue review, and *Starburst* itself for print it.

However, some of the views which he raises are incredible, and I am rather surprised that we haven't seen any letters responding to them before now. I mean, Mr Marmor states that he's only highlighting *Starburst*'s bad points without mentioning the multitude of good ones. Well, if you'd have told me he enjoyed *Starburst* you could have fooled me!

Obviously, Mr Marmor is right to point out some of the magesines faults or mistakes. For example, the lack of colour. I think it's ok to have loads of colour in a levish U.S. magazine. But I think each magazine satisfies slightly different areas of appeal. I mean, if you're looking for glossy pictures and information, the American mags are very edgy. But its pretty hopeless if you want honest, intelligent, and constructive criticism. It's pretty hopeless and even perhaps boring. *Starburst* provides information and criticism (good and bad points), and it isn't dull — it recognises we've all got points of view. Doubtless we could be given pages of colour too — but 95 plus pence for such a magazine is pretty expensive!

Mr Marmor's comments on *Starburst* 22 (ref: the Gerry Anderson Productions, etc.) are unbelievable. There can't be many of us who doubt that *Space 1999* was made

for American audiences, specially since that's where all the money is. Mr Marmor says it suffered due to its "crass stupidity". I was always under the impression that it was the first series episodes which were 'absurd'. On the second series, a scientific advisor checked scripts for stupid mistakes and premises. Yet what? It still got cancelled! And of course, I assume that when Mr Marmor talks about *Space* not having any 'superster status', he's on about American guests/cast. America is biggest, and biggest is best? Mr Marmor then goes on to accuse John Brosnan (and the British readers, too) of virtual anti-American sentiment but like other Americans, refuses to acknowledge the large contributions which the British film/tv industries make to British and international productions.

Mr Marmor must be very narrow-minded if he cannot bear to read reviews which point out (gaspl) the faults in films. Anyone who does this is "slandering and libelling".

I don't believe film companies should expect you to write laudatory (and therefore possibly dishonest) reviews in exchange for press information. What's the point of having a magazine reviewing movies if you know that they're going to say something nice about them? It's treating the readers as mindless zombies unable to accept any real critical debate — at least John Brosnan realises he's giving us something which we can think about and disagree with if we wish! And what's the harm in that?

Simon Morris,
Shropshire.

We regret that we cannot enter into correspondence with readers nor answer letters personally.

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JOYCE CARSON FANS UNITE!

CINE
REVUE

JOYCE CARSON



I thought the readers of *Starburst* might enjoy a look at this revealing snap of that little-known English actress, Joyce Carson, which appeared in a recent issue of the French magazine, *Cine-Revue*.

Something about her looks familiar, don't you think?

Michel Parry, Brentford, Middlesex.

THINGS TO COME

CANNES ON TRIAL

This was the year the Cannes festival was on trial. Hollywood was judge, jury and very nearly executioner. The Americans felt (quite rightly, and not just them) that they had been ripped off enough last year when hotel and bar prices rocketed for the festival fortnight. You'd be lucky then to get change out of a fiver for a coke—at some bars. Usually, those bars like the Hotel Carlton terrace where everyone who thinks they're anyone tend to congregate in order to be seen by everyone else who also happens to think they're someone...

STELLA STARR II

Stella Starr lives...!

That's the big news emanating from the somewhat frantic festival locations of Caroline Munro's *Last Horror Film*—about which I said more than enough last month. Once *Horror* is in the can (or indeed, the Cannes), the same Neon production team—director David Winters, producer Judd Hamilton—are making ready to start shooting... *Stella Starr vs The Space Pirates*.

The script is an old one, but somewhat beefed—wall, Munro—up. It stems from Luigi Cozzi's *Star Patrol*, in fact, which was never penned with Stella Starr in mind. She's not even in it. But she sure is now. Caroline shares the rights in the Stella character with Luigi, and Judd (Caroline's husband and the robot in the first film) has been trying to get a sequel into operation for some years. Luigi Cozzi is not overly interested in repeating *Star Crash* or any of the characters, so he's left them to it. So far, the Hamiltons have opted out—at the very last minute—of two Americans backed plans for a sequel. The scripts, or more important the handling of Stella and the other characters, didn't satisfy them. (It was after the second project fell through that Caroline, at a loose end in New York, made *Maniac*).

"It's great news, isn't it?" said Caroline in Cannes. "I always say the gypsy girl in *Captain Kronos* is my favourite character in my films—I enjoy walking round with bare feet and that—but Stella is very important to me. A nice, biggy role with lots of action scenes I love to do—karate, running, all outdoor stuff. She's a sort of swashbuckling lady, a sort of *Barbarella-Wonder Woman* type... not killing men, just her own woman, really."

Judd will turn up again as Stella's robot companion. And leading the space pirates will be none other than Caroline's *Maniac* and *Last Horror*



Top: *Maniac* star Joe Spinell poses for a photograph on the set of his latest movie *The Last Horror Film*, which also features his *Maniac* partner Caroline Munro. Above: Caroline Munro and husband Judd Hamilton, producer of *The Last Horror Film*, pose for photographers while on location at the Cannes Film Festival. Photographs courtesy of Trevor Jeal.

Film co-star, Joe Spinell. After which, I think that'll be just enough of this strange beauty-and-the-beast teaming, fellas.

TAPED!

In discussing the whys and wherefores of *The Last Horror Film* last month, I mentioned how it appeared to have evolved from an interview I had in Cannes last year with Caroline and Judd when, admittedly, they—and I—were still a trifle queasy from our first viewing of *Maniac*. Judd agreed that he—actually, we—had suggested the idea back then but that none of the unit believed him.

OK, to help Judd prove his case and me win my percentage! I've been listening again to my old tapes. (We never ran the interview because someone else beat me to rapping with Caroline). None of us liked *Maniac* (which I gather was not the rather better edited version now on release around the world), and the chat went down like this...

Caroline: What did you think?

Crawley: Judd's too big for me to say. He's the co-producer after all!

Caroline: Oh no, please say. Please do say.

Crawley: I hated it! But there's an audience out there for this kind of blood-soaked film, we all know that—otherwise nobody would put the money up to make it.

Judd: What you've said is something interesting... I'm amazed there is an audience. I wouldn't go to see that film, even though I paid a pretty heavy price for the ticket! Things that were important to us are knocked out of that film. Now it shows explicit violence only.

Caroline: That didn't upset me—just the way the violence was used. It didn't mean anything. In the script you could see why this was happening. Tom Savini's effects were good—I stayed up one night watching him at work.

Judd: Sure the effects are fine. But the *effect* is gone. Everything we were supporting—the fascinating character of the maniac, really mad beyond control, yet with a normal side that finally did him in—aren't seen or explained as well as in the script. We've never been so badly affected by a film. We couldn't sleep last night. I woke up this morning and decided not to defend it. I would take the loss. Except I found buyers at my door. Everyone wants the film.

Crawley: Because there is, tragically, an audience for it. What you should do is make a movie about them...

Judd: You're right! *Maniac* is a bad piece of blood and gore. We'll have a big success from an audience that shouldn't exist. Now I'd like to make a film about that audience... you know, they think this guy's a freak...

Crawley: What about them!

Judd: Exactly.

Compiled by Tony Crawley

And that's roughly what Caroline and Judd's new movie is about—as the ultimate horror fan starts killing people who dig (and make) horror movies.

Just send my cut along to the office, Judd.

MANIAC II?

Ironically, while Caroline and Joe were filming in the streets, their audience included their *Maniac* director, ex-porno director William Lustig. He had a new film to flog—not that he's made it yet, it won't be finished until March—but that's the way it goes in Cannes. The title is *Vigilante* and it was being sold on the strength of Lustig's *Maniac* name by

the canny Irvin Shapiro who handles foreign sales on George Romero's movies. Subject? "When people are pushed to the brink," explains Bill Lustig, "there's hell to pay..." Autobiographical perhaps?

THE WORST?

But the worst is yet to come... Among the finished films Alexander Beck was selling from his stand in the Palais building was a charming little item named *Bloodsucking Freaks*. Joel Reed shot it in ghoul-o-vision and the result comes with a built-in warning: "This film contains scenes of a gross and disgusting nature and if you're not disgusted, then you should see a shrink!"

PROM NIGHT II

Prom Night meets *The Island in a Blue Lagoon*... That just about sums up the contents of Paul Lynch's next release, *The Graduation Party*. His cast of youngsters (headed by Kathy McCallen, who has already survived *Evilspeak*, and Sandy Christopher, escaping one *Fantasy Island* for another) survive a seaplane crash en route to a weekend prom party on a private island retreat. They end up—very wet—on a desert isle, where soon enough Joe Spinell, with his new Cannes tan, and John Quid (from Clint Eastwood's *Any Which Way You*

Can) arrive as a pair of tequila-drunk drug-dealers who set about raping and torturing the kids. They kill one, as well.

The movie is one of three Hemdale feature which started rolling early in June to stave off the effects of the upcoming directors' strike. After *Creepshow* (see last month), *The Graduation Party* had the next best poster in Cannes. And Hemdale's own International Times publicity newspaper had the biggest mistake. It named the film's director as *Elephant Man's* David Lynch instead of *Prom Night's* Paul Lynch. That's called having ideas above your station...



Above: Tony Crawley's vote for the second best advertising art at this year's Cannes Film Fest. The winner was, of course, EC artist Jack Kamen's stunning homage to the EC Comics, for the King/Romero movie *Creepshow*, printed in this column last month.

MALL MURDERS

I don't like to thumb-down a film before it's made, but Hemdale's other big number currently before the cameras is not as good as it first sounds. *The Mall* reminds one of Romero's mall setting in *Dead of the Dead*, and suggests one of those lone warriors with a rifle atop a tower, shooting the poor innocents below, as in *Targets*, and far too often in reality.

It's none of these, but more in keeping with *Friday The 13th* (again?) with a bunch of youngsters having an all-night party in a shopping mall and being wasted there, instead of around ye olde camp-fire.

The sales pitch is good ("shopping at the mall is murder") but as familiar as such malls are these days, I'm sure the title will be changed on release. It's not frightening enough. George Cosmatos, the Greek but now Canadian director, disagrees. "The mall background is so similar worldwide that I expect moviegoers from

Above: The Alexander Beck/Joel Reed offering, *Bloodsucking Freaks*. The first film shot in Ghoul-o-Vision. Really fellas, must you?

THINGS TO COME

Bangkok to Kyoto to Helsinki to Naples to be equally familiar with such complexes and thus to experience the same kind of shocks and terror from the action drama they'll be watching. The setting will be like another actor in the picture."

The chief character, uncast as we went to press, is your typical movie horror movie killer. Just out of a mental institution, after stabbing his parents to death as a kiddie, he sets up home in the displays of a large department store. From here he stalks his chosen victim and does away with them, hiding all the evidence. On the night of the youngsters' party in the mall, he has a fine old time... killing one victim in the lingerie department and decapitating a lad in the bowling alley. I just can't help feeling I've seen it all before...

Cosmatos, assistant director on *Exodus* and *Zorba the Greek*, later got... to the making of Low Grade rubbish like *The Cassandra Crossing* and *Escape to Athena*. I'm not too struck on him either. But he says he intends using unusual camera techniques, including micro lenses, to "get in on my characters atmosphere, and thus create further frightening visual experiences." Lotse luck.

But change the time. How about... **Check Out?**



RATS RETURN

It's been some years now since we enjoyed the adventures of **Ben and Willard** (Harrison Ford still insists he didn't name his sons after the films). Now their kin are on their way back... Golden Harvest, the **Megaforce** people, are preparing a juicy little shocker item called—**The Rats**. They won't, I gather, be big monster rats. They don't need to be. Rats are menacing enough as they are, breeding so rapidly that one pair can produce 15,000 offspring in a single year. They've also become increasingly immune to our poisons and have even survived in atomic test areas where all other life was destroyed. Says Tom Gray of Golden Harvest, "The greatest single threat to the continued existence of man on this planet is rats."

SUPER FLIGHT

The entire Supie ethos of "you'll believe a man can fly" came into stunning perspective in the Swiss entry in the festival's competition, Alain Tanner's wondrous **Light Years Away**. This could be termed science fiction, since it's set in "nowhere" after the third world war in the year 2000 (but that's mainly because the young man in the film is called Jonas and is 25 and Tanner once made a movie called *Jonas Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000*). It can definitely be classed as fantasy—a fable, in fact, a new found version of the sorcerer and the apprentice, taken from Danile Odier's book, *La Voie Sauvage*, about an old hermit (a Merlin, if you will) who wants to fly like the birds. And does so!

We don't actually see Trevor Howard take off and flap his enormous

wings up into the heavens. That would not only have been too expensive for such an intimate movie, but totally unnecessary. Unlike Michael Crawford in Disney's **Condorman**, we don't need to see him fly. The way Tanner weaves his gem of a tale—the meticulous manner in which Howard and Mick Ford play it—we simply believe...

The film was shot in Ireland in Ireland—"Daniel Odier told me I had a strong chance of finding that 'nowhere' in Ireland and it was love at first sight," says Tanner. It's the kind of movie that usually plays the Academy Cinema in London and the best art-houses in any country. It'll most likely turn up at the London and New York festivals and everywhere else's and really should not be missed. It says more about life, love and fantasy than half a dozen *Jaws*, *Maniacs* or even *Supermans*.



ISRAEL SF

Science fiction, of the more definite article, is on the way from, of all places, Israel. Well, it's true to say that Israel has a thriving film industry, and some fine directors—notably the actress-turned helmer, Michael Bet-Adam. But Israeli sf... It does tend to make the mind boggle. Thirtieth Century Films is the Tel Aviv combine



Above: A scene from the Israeli made feature *Message from the Future*, starring Joseph Bee (see Israeli SF).

MASK RIDER

Missing from the Cannes scene—at least I never stumbled across it, and it had been promised—was the super-duper gleaming white speedy (Honda) bike of Japan's top comic-strip hero, **The Moon Mask Rider**. For the last quarter-century, the white uniform, muffler, mask and white-edged sunglasses of this character have been more popular than **Superman** for Japanese kids. When he was transferred from comics to television, he won a 65% rating end emptied streets and play areas. Now director Yukihiro Sawada is hoping to do the same—but world-wide—with the first **Rider** movie. It all depends on the dubbing, matey...

A certain Daisuke Kuwabara (and assorted stunters) wears sculptor Setsu Asakura's flashy costumes and rides designer Takuya Yura's bike, developed over six months from a 750cc Honda into a 150mph machine, packed with gadgetry from ultra rays to radar. The bike alone cost 10,000 dollars, and executive producer is



very insistent that the assorted weaponry is for defence purposes only. What else?

The movie, based on the executive producer Kohan Kawachi's novel, pits our, or rather their, hero against

the crazed leader of a religious cult which turns impressionable youngsters into his slaves. He rules them with his heavies known as The Red Masks. Their motto: The end justifies the means. Old Moon Mask doesn't agree with such sentiments. When the Reds rob banks, he zooms in, around and above them, snatching back the cash-boxes and returning them—minus 10% for the poor. Oh, he's a shining white knight, this hero. Agile, too. Jumping on to helicopter struts. Teckling the big bad villain all on his ownsome... with the bike parked around the corner. (Mustn't damage that, at 10,000 a throw!)

With a major merchandising campaign behind it—from ordinary bikes to schoolbags, records and books to jeans and tee-shirts—Nippon Herald Films are out to conquer the world with their masked hero. The East, at least. He's not such an easy **Rider** for other territories, I would have thought. Though if that directors' strike hits hard from July onward, a lot of big companies will be short of product soon after the summer... so you never know.

THINGS TO COME

behind *Message from the Future*, which we hope to be looking at in greater detail in a few months' time. David Aviden is the writer-director of the ingenious time-travel drama in which a messenger from the year 3005 travels back to 1985 with an odd mission. He has to convince modern-day leaders to advance World War Three to help produce "a better future".

CARRADINE, PERE

My apologies to John Carradine. In the rush of writing last month's first column report on Cannes '81, I mentioned he had two films being touted around the festival market. I should have known better. His total was four—New Zealand's *Scarecrow*, America's *Deathhouse* and *Dark Eyes*, and Ken Hertford's *Monstroid*, which is exactly the kind of U.S. film to make Jack Arnold hurry up and get his *Creature From The Black Lagoon* remake on the move again, just to show all these other shoot-first, edit-later guys how it's done. (If Arnold's remake plans with Universal reach fruition, John Landis will be directing, he tells me).



HONG KONG HORROR

Also in need in deft salesmanship—and dubbing—is the gruesome horror movie from producer Run Run Shaw in Hong Kong. Unlike Raymond Chow, Shaw is still very

much into the chop-socky routine, with the occasional breakaway like *Corpse Mania*. A good enough title for overseas sales, I suppose. But the names of the characters in director Kwei Chih Hung's movie (of his actors too... Wang Yung and Tanny) will cause problems unless they're Westernised. This is more or less a

Jack The Ripper yarn, with a whole series of murders of prostitutes, or "courtesans", it says here. As to who-dunnit, let me offer you a muddling example of the possibilities from the Cannes synopsis: "Chang tells Hu that Li has a motive. Lan has cheated him out of much money." Ah so...!



Above: Pamela Hensley and the cast (of suspects) from Walter Byron Hillman's *Double Exposure*.

LIEUT. ARDALA

Back Rogers may have been axed from tv, but Pamela Hensley is still around—and up to her pretty nose in a string of photographic model murders in a just finished American movie which owes something to Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom*. Like an epology, perhaps... We'll know after August 1, when writer-director William Byron Hillman's *Double Exposure* is first released in the US.

Gorgeous Pem is not among the potential victims. In a nice twist of casting, the ex-Princess Ardala of the 25th Century is Lieut Fontaine—the cop in charge of the puzzling case.

Chief suspect is played by film's co-producer Michael Cullen (also Chuck Colson in Martin Sheen's *Blind Ambition* series about Watergate). At least, he suspects himself in the suspenser. He's a top photographer beset by recurring nightmares—premonitions of himself murdering his

beautiful models. James Stacy, the personable young actor, who lost an arm and a leg, but not his career, in a motor-cycle accident some years back, is well cast as Callan's brother—he's almost a Callan clone.

And the Mickey Powell touch? Well as Pem Hensley pieces the clues from several bloodthirsty murders together, she finds a common denominator. A print is left at each murder scene. Not a finger or foot print—but that of a camera's tripod. The killer is obviously taking pictures of his victims as they are dying...

FINALE

One fact about the Cannes film festival remains obvious to all—including the Americans: Cannes will not die. Not as long as it keeps on its best behaviour as this year—and makes ready its new Sunday-best clothing befitting its age end size. The re-organisation of all events was much improved, no scrambles or fist-fights to get into theatres to actually see the films, for a change. And with the new Palais building on its way up for a semi-opening in '82 and completion by '85, the town, itself, is working hard to stick around as the site of the world's hugest cinema event for another 34 years or more to come.

For once, even the starlets, or would-be starlets, on the Carlton beach were getting signed up for movies. Well, for *that* movie anyway. Among the bevy of beauties basking their way into *The Last Horror Film* was a blonde American named Annie Ample. That she was. She makes Dolly Parton look like Twiggy.

What? Oh yes, this year you could get a change out of a fiver for two cokes. Or you could if you caught the right waiter. I bought two simple beers on the Hotel Carlton terrace one night. A stupid move. They cost me... £4. I shot back to the main Press haunt, known as the Petit Carlton. Petit prices, too. Two beers there cost 50p... and Sam Neill even bought his own. Nice fella... for a Demon.

As for those 500 films over fourteen days, I managed to catch 52 of them. But then, I was also into 32 interviews over the same period. That's Cannes for you. Organised or otherwise, it's one mad, wonderful cine-circus. Two weeks without sleep!

KIT PEDLER

1927-1981



The man who created the classic television series *Doomwatch* has died, aged 53.

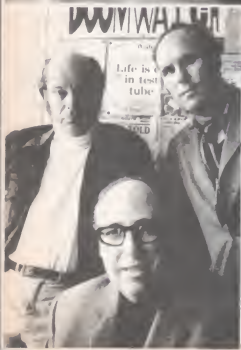
Dr Kit Pedler trained in the medical field. He gained a PhD for work on the causes of a retinal disease and published nearly forty papers about vision and the eye. Later, he created and headed the University of London's electron microscopy department. He became interested in how the brain processed visual information and this led to his computer simulation of nerve cells. His first television work was on *Doctor Who*: with Gerry Davies, he co-created those emotionless scientific villains, the Cybermen.

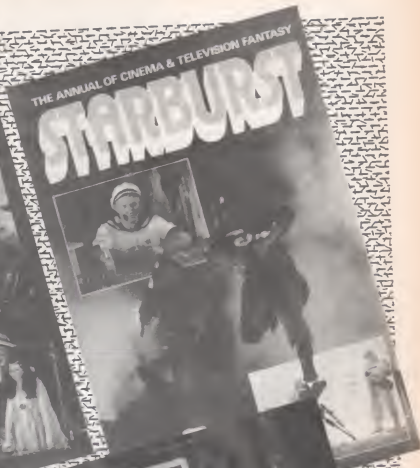
Pedler and Davies then went on to co-create the highly-popular *Doomwatch* series (1970) for BBC tv. The programme looked at the scientific and moral dilemmas faced by a government-funded group of scientists who monitored "advances" and catastrophes in the scientific community and their effect on the world at large. It struck a chord in those conservationist times. Writer Dennis Spooner, who scripted three of the episodes, says in upcoming *Starburst* interview:

"Kit Pedler had worked for the government. He kept wandering into scientific establishments and coming out with armfuls of files marked Top Secret. It scared me to death; the episodes were based on truth. I wrote one about nerve gas leakage from the English Channel." *Doomwatch* was also successful as soap opera. It made a star out of Robert Powell, who played young heart-throb Toby Wren. There was shocked disbelief when the character was killed while trying to defuse a bomb in the final episode of the first series.

When *Doomwatch* ended, Kit Pedler went on to write five radio series about scientific concepts and two radio plays: *Trial By Logic* and *Sunday Lunch*. He also made a considerable contribution to television documentaries with *The Eye* for BBC tv's *Horizon* series and programmes on cybernetics and artificial intelligence for ITV. He died while working on the final programme of Thames TV's recent *Mind Over Matter*. Pedler had spent three years researching the series, which examined paranormal happenings such as metal-bending, faith-healing, extra-sensory perception and out-of-body experiences. He wrote a related book (*Mind Over Matter*, pub. Thames Methuen) and had been planning another Thames series *Living Without Oil*. He will be missed.

Top: *Doctor Kit Pedler*. Far left: Kit Pedler, producer Terence Dudley and writer Gerry Davies pose for a publicity photo for BBC's *Doomwatch*. Left: Behind the scenes during the recording of the Tenth Planet serial of *Doctor Who*.





TOMORROW THE WORLD!

From a humble beginning in 1977, Starburst has flourished and grown into the magazine it is today. In issue 35, we gave you eight extra pages in full colour. In issue 36, the magazine went to full A4 size. But we're not finished yet. July saw the release of the first Starburst Poster Magazine featuring Excalibur. August brings the release of the very first Starburst Annual (all-new, no reprint!).

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DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS

Report by John Fleming

In *Starburst* 18, producer David Maloney said he was going to make John Wyndham's classic *Day of the Triffids* into a BBC tv serial. Now, at long last, he has managed it.

Back in 1979, he commissioned a script from writer/actor Douglas Livingstone (currently playing Gimli in BBC Radio's *Lord of the Rings*). The new *Day of the Triffids* was supposed to be shot and shown in 1980, but the money was not available to make it.

This year, the money has been found through a three-way co-financing deal between BBC tv, the Australian Broadcasting Commission and the RCTV cable network in America. The RCTV network is co-owned by the Rockefeller Centre and RCA; in December 1980, they signed a deal which gave them first option on all BBC productions for the next ten years. This effectively means that *Day of the Triffids* will not be shown on any of the three major broadcast networks in the US.

The *Triffids* deal is complicated because two versions of the serial are being made. The BBC will show *Day of the Triffids* in six 26-

minute episodes; ABC and RCTV will screen it in three 50-minute episodes. There should be no major script-losses because, although Douglas Livingstone was commissioned to write six episodes, he was aware as long ago as November 1979 that these might be re-edited to 50-minute versions.

David Maloney says that he and the BBC struggled so long to get the programme on the screen: "Because the adaptation was so successful. We just felt it really had to be made. We've kept very close to the original book, although we haven't set it in the early 1950s. If we had set it in that period, I think it would have—to use a triffid phrase—taken the sting out of it. We want to make it as if it could happen tomorrow. I think it's right to update it and it works.

"As we've been making it," says Maloney, "We've found it a very, very stark and frightening story. Because the novel is dated in the early 1950s, that somehow effaces the starkness of the story—the catastrophe" aspect. Douglas has done a very good job of updating it and because the story now



Above: Director Ken Hannam (third from the left in the sheepskin coat) with the crew of *Day of the Triffids*. Left: Director Ken Hannam (right) discusses progress with a crew member. Opposite top: Star John Duttine as Bill Masen. Note the Triffid Gun. Opposite: The Army arrives on the scene. Opposite below: John Duttine as Bill Masen.

happens 'next year', with all the parallels of national catastrophe that we're thinking about, it has a certain frightening quality. We've set out to make it as realistic as possible and parts of it are pretty nightmarish." Perhaps because of that, the likely transmission time will be 8.30 pm—much later than *Doctor Who* or even *Blake's 7*, thus theoretically depriving the serial of some of its younger viewers.

The programme's visual effects were originally going to be designed by Ian Scoones but, during the production delay, he left the BBC to handle effects for ITC's *Hammer House of Horror* series. So the task of creating the triffids fell to Steve Drewett, who had previously worked with David Maloney on the third *Blake's 7* series. (We have been asked not to publish pictures of the triffids before transmission, but we will carry an article including design-sketches and behind-the-scenes shots once the triffids have appeared on screen).

The effects, given the nature of the story, are not a particularly large item on the

programme budget. What has upped the budget, according to Maloney, is: "It's just a very fragmented story (shot 55% on film and 45% on videotape). It moves around everywhere. In that sense, it's very expensive to make. We start in the hospital and then move on and on through set after set. There's no continuity of sets or actors through the various episodes."

There are three central characters literally running through the story. Starring as triffid farmer Bill Masen is John Duttine, whom Maloney directed several years ago in an episode of the police series *Softly Softly* and whom he now describes as "probably one of the hottest acting properties in Britain today." Duttine's performances include John the Evangelist in *Jesus of Nazareth*, the husband in award-winning tv-movie *Spend, Spend, Spend*, the schoolmaster in *To Serve Them All My Days* and Donald Radlett in *The Mallens*.

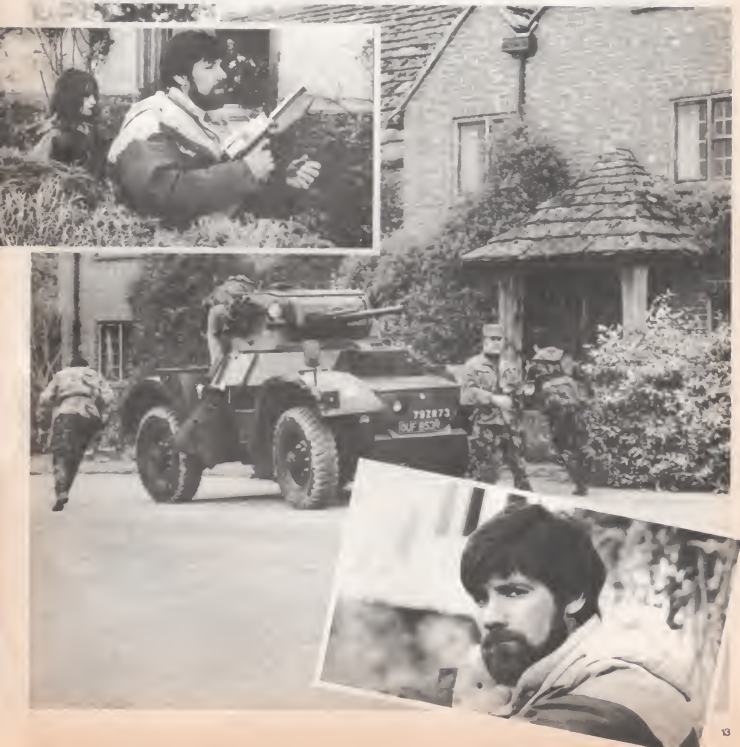
Co-starring as heroine Josella Payton is fairly unknown actress Emma Relph (the daughter of film producer Michael Relph)

who recently played a 'papal groupie' in the Polish feature film *From a Far Place*.

The third central character is villain Jack Coker played by Maurice Colbourne, star of BBC tv's *Gangsters* series and a co-founder of London's Half Moon Theatre. (He also had the misfortune to appear in *Hawk the Slayer*).

Trying to hold all these disparate elements together is director Ken Hannam, who has divided his professional life between Britain and Australia, mainly in episodic television such as *Dr Finlay's Casebook*, *Z-Cars*, *The Onedin Line* and *The Assassination Run*, but also finding time to direct four feature films: the award-winning *Sunday Too Far Away* (1973), *Break of Day* (1976), *Summerhill* (1977) and *Dawn!* (1978).

Day of the Triffids is scheduled for autumn transmission and, although it is heavily-weighted towards dramatic realism at the expense of fantasy, it should be worth watching, especially for the film camera work of Peter Hall, whose BBC credits include *War and Peace*, *Rebecca*, *Dracula* and *Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde*.



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EYES OF A STRANGER



He knows you're alone so don't answer the phone when a stranger calls — it could be a psycho. It isn't Halloween or Prom Night but Wait Until Dark and the Blind Terror might begin.

All these and more are at the roots of *Eyes of a Stranger* although the biggest influence of the lot is clearly John Carpenter's 1978 tv movie *Someone is Watching Me*, (which in turn was inspired by Hitchcock's *Rear Window*).

A "phone-freak" is homing in on lonely girls living alone in Miami, assaulting and killing them. A local tv newsreader, who lives with her deaf, dumb and blind sister, starts to suspect a man in the neighbouring tower block, whose apartment is in line with hers. Her suspicions are confirmed when she breaks into his apartment and finds some vital evidence. So what does she do? Go to the police like she has been imploring her viewers to do at the slightest arousal of suspicion? No, of course not — (there wouldn't be any story otherwise, would there?) — she starts to give him a taste of his own medicine by anonymously telephoning him with the threat of discovery. But he recognises her voice from a newscast and begins to close in on her defenceless sister...

I honestly think I've said all there is to say about this sort of movie now. This is just downright illogical and stupid and isn't going to fool anyone with its cobbled-together synthesis of other people's ideas. The perfunctorily built suspense has had all the edge taken off it by the severe curtailment of Tom Savini's gore effects in this country. As the film really only has sexual sadism on its mind perhaps this is a blessing in disguise. There is also little to say about using a handicapped victim as a plot device — it isn't frightening as thoughtlessly intended, just distasteful in context.

Director Ken Wiederhorn has only directed one other film that I know of, the eerily atmospheric *Almost Human* (the retitled *Shock Waves* starring Peter Cushing as the head of a band of Nazi zombies), scenes of which flicker on a television set during the early part of the film and only serve as an unfortunate reminder that he really is slumming it with this factory line example of higher-budgeted trash.

Eyes of a Stranger (1981)

Lauren Tewes (as Jane), Jennifer Jason Leigh (Tracy), John Di Santi (Stanley Herbert), Peter DuPre (David), Gwen Lewis (Debbie), Kitty Lunn (Annette), Timothy Hawkins (Jeff), Ted Richert (Roger England), Toni Crabtree (Mona), Bob Small (Dr Bob), Stella Rivera (dancer), Dan Fitzgerald (bartender), Jose Bahamonde (Jimmy), Rhonda Flynn (woman in car), Tony Frederico (man in car).

Directed by Ken Wiederhorn, Screenplay by Mark Jackson and Eric L. Bloom, Edited by Rick Shaine, Music by Richard Einhorn, Director of photography Mini Rojas, Art director Jessica Sack, Special make-up effects Tom Savini, Associate producer Roslyn M. Meyer, Produced by Ronald Zerra.

Time: 83 mins

Cert: x

When I heard that Bond producer Cubby Broccoli had taken the criticism of *Moonraker* to heart and was going to try a different approach to *For Your Eyes Only*, cutting back on the humour among other things, I was very pleased. I was even more pleased when director John Glen told me that *From Russia With Love* was his favourite Bond and that he was trying to get that same quality into the new Bond, even though I had my doubts that he would achieve this. Time, after all, has moved on from when *From Russia With Love* was made and the Bond series has changed drastically over the years. Would audiences who have grown accustomed to Bond movies of the 1970s with their faster tempo and almost complete detachment from reality, accept a throwback in style and approach to the Bond of 1963? More importantly, would Broccoli risk his usual huge profits by giving the public something different from what they expected?

Well, *For Your Eyes Only* is certainly different from *Moonraker* in many respects but it is no *From Russia With Love*. Instead of going all the way back to 1963 I'd say the makers stopped at 1973 as the film *FYEO* most resembles in style and approach is *Live and Let Die*, though more money has obviously been lavished on *FYEO* and it's definitely superior to the former film in terms of technical quality. *FYEO* may lack the slapstick elements of *Moonraker*, along with the science fiction hardware, the giant sets and Jaws, but it has none of the mood of *From Russia With Love*. One of the reasons for this has to do with the subject of plot. *For Your Eyes Only* doesn't have one...

If you look at *From Russia With Love* you'll see that it has a solidly constructed storyline which, of course, owes much to the original Fleming novel—the first part of the film shows SPECTRE setting up the scheme that is designed to destroy Bond and discredit the Secret Service; the middle section deals with Bond blithely walking into the trap to obtain the bait (the cypher machine and the girl) and the third section consists of one long chase as Bond attempts to avoid the closing teeth of the trap, just barely managing to overcome every obstacle SPECTRE can put in his way. The film thus has a built-in momentum as the plot develops and the pace quickens with each change of the narrative gear.

There are no such changes of gear in *For Your Eyes Only* because there is no plot to be developed and though there are plenty of moments of high excitement they are all on the same emotional level. At the end of the film you don't feel that you have travelled from A to C (or to B) but simply gone round in circles. It is definitely a movie where you can start watching it at any point and not feel confused about what is going on—because there is *nothing* going on.

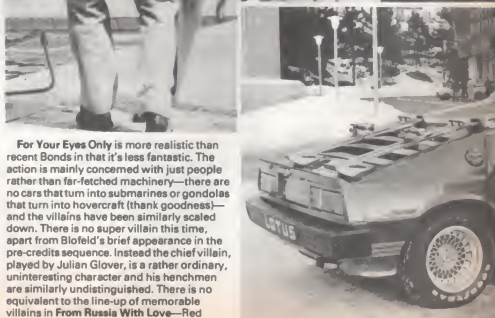
As a substitute for a plot it was not enough to just cobble together two of the stories from the *For Your Eyes Only* anthology and then frame it with a vague storyline about a missing code transmitter. Of the two themes taken from the short stories the revenge one might have worked if more attention had been paid to it but it gets lost along the way. The other problem with it is that Carole Bouquet isn't very convincing as the girl looking for revenge. Though extremely beautiful, Ms Bouquet is far from successful at suggesting she is a fiery half-Greek girl burning with a passion for vengeance. In fact I suspect the only way you could get a fiery look in those gorgeous eyes would be to hook her up to a 50,000 volt generator (Lynn Holly Johnson, who plays the ice-skating nymphet, has much more screen presence and comes across as the only real person in the picture).

FOR YOUR

JOHN BROSNAN REVIEWS THE LATEST IN THE JAMES



Above: James Bond (Roger Moore) and Columbo (Topol) in a scene from *For Your Eyes Only*. Below: James Bond swings into action at the mansion of the assassin Gonzales. Right: A portrait of Roger Moore as James Bond.



For Your Eyes Only is more realistic than recent Bonds in that it's less fantastic. The action is mainly concerned with just people rather than far-fetched machinery—there are no cars that turn into submarines or gondolas that turn into hovercraft (thank goodness)—and the villains have been similarly scaled down. There is no super villain this time, apart from Blofeld's brief appearance in the pre-credits sequence. Instead the chief villain, played by Julian Glover, is a rather ordinary, uninteresting character and his henchmen are similarly undistinguished. There is no equivalent to the line-up of memorable villains in *From Russia With Love*—Red

TIME BANDITS

Right: Kevin (Craig Warnock) waits in his bedroom, armed with his Polaroid camera, for the Knight in Armour to appear out of his wardrobe (1). Below: Ralph Richardson plays the Supreme Being – God to his friends. Below right: Michael Palin and Shelley Duvall play the post-truck couple, Vincent and Pansy.



Review by Alan Jones

Every once in a while a film comes along that knocks you for six. I had no idea that *Time Bandits* would be anything more than a live action variant on *Monty Pythonesque*

pseudo-animation and as such, I really wasn't looking forward to it. The opening minutes almost compounded that preconceived opinion with its overstated lampooning of a slightly futuristic consumer society – but then, as the main ingenious story took hold – I realised I was watching fantasy film making of the highest order. Witty, highly imaginative, frightening – a totally original entertain-

ment that doesn't fit into any category I can think of. It was the moment when the six dwarves burst through Kevin's wardrobe and push his bedroom wall into the Napoleonic Wars...

I'd better explain more fully. The Supreme Being, (God to those who know him well enough), as we all know created the Universe in six days. Not much when you think about it and as a result a few



Left: David Warner gives perhaps the best performance of *The Time Bandits* as Evil Genius. Below left: *The Time Bandits* of the title pose with their map of the holes in the universe while Kevin (Craig Warnock, out of frame) snaps a polaroid picture. Below right: John Cleese gives a typically adept performance as an upper class Robin Hood, who bears an uncanny resemblance to Prince Philip.



flaws in its fabric are to be expected. A blueprint of these holes in time and space has been given to six dwarves who are supposed to be repairing them but instead they are misusing the map to greedily plunder the treasures of past, present, future, mythic, legendary and fantastic Kingdoms. One of the time holes is situated in 11 year old Kevin's wardrobe and one night, while going early to bed to

get away from his mother's overbearing parents finds himself in a 19th century polaroid camera, witness their (imagined) Napoleonic victory, meeting a 17th century Robin Hood than would hardly be believe, (played by John Cleese - let me believe), helping Agamemnon defeat the Minotaur in ancient Greece (and much more. All this time travelling comes to a halt when the band much against Kevin's



wishes, decide to pursue the Most Fabulous Object in the World, a decision that sends them to the nightmarish Kingdom of Ultimate Darkness where they eventually confront absolute Evil with an army concocted from different time zones. This spectacular battle of Knights, Archers, Cowboys, tanks and spacecraft ends with a final, all-meaningful appearance from the Supreme Being. But ►



Top left: King Agamemnon (Sean Connery) does battle with the Minotaur. Top right: Shelley Duvall and Michael play the starry-eyed lovers Pansy and Vincent. Above left: Peter Vaughan and Katherine Helmond play Mr and Mrs Ogre. Above right: The Time Bandits attempt to escape from the prison cage of Evil Genius. Right: Ian Holm gives a memorable performance as Napoleon, who believes that height makes the man. Far right: David Warner, in gas mask, as Evil Genius.

Evil has one last card to play, and the moral twist in this tale — *The Wizard of Oz* for the '80s — is light years away from the message "There's no place like Home".

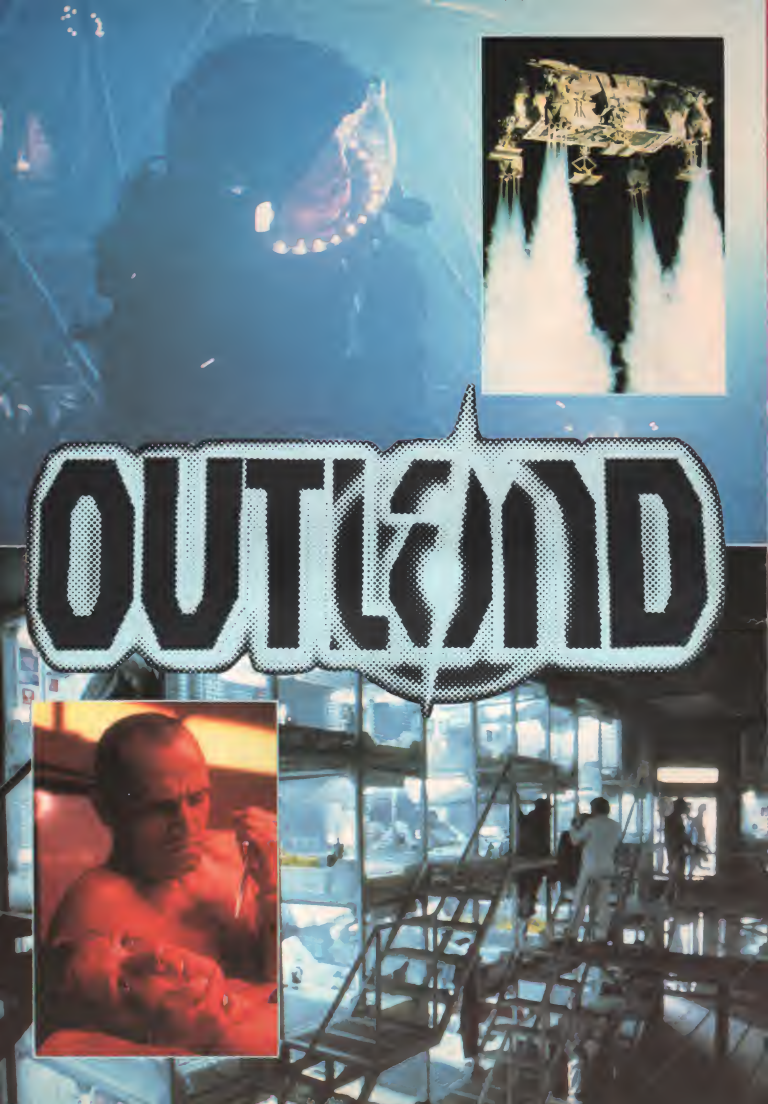
Time Bandits literally does "burst with inventiveness" as the pressbook says. I couldn't have put it better myself, it sums the film up superbly. Director Terry Gilliam's flair for the fantastic has now

been fully realised. I didn't particularly like his Monty Python films or *Jabberwocky*, the latter being all style and no substance. Well, *Time Bandits* has style alright, (Gilliam is helped yet again by production designer Milly Burns who was art director on *Jabberwocky*), and a cornucopia of substance co-scripted by himself and Michael Palin. They have created a dark parable laced with the

correct proportions of mystery and irreverent humour. It takes you from the sublime to the ridiculous and back again, often in the same frame. There is a calculated risk that this treatment might alienate the audience and I do have to admit to being in a minority in my passionate regard for this movie but even the dissenters have to concede that it has an extraordinary fascination, like it or



such staggering brilliance on the screen again for a long while to come. How Evil (played by David Warner in tip-top form as a leering, technologically seduced dilettante), transforms himself into a death machine, that deals in a startlingly novel way with some attacking cowboys, has to be seen to be believed! It is one of the finest moments in a film that contains a plethora of fine moments.



OUTLAND





High Noon has been suggested as an alternative title for *Outland*, and with good reason as the movie is simply *High Noon* transposed to an outer space setting. Sean Connery plays the Marshall who has to face alone the hired killers arriving at his isolated mining community — located on one of Jupiter's moons — on the noon space shuttle. The locals, with one exception, refuse to help him and his young wife is making tracks for Earth. All that's missing is someone singing "Do Not For-sake Me O' My Darling" on the sound-track.

Many years ago when the science fiction pulp magazines were booming, the fans of that era used to complain that many so-called sf writers were simply writing westerns set in outer space — space horse operas, which is how the term "space opera" came into being. Now, decades later, Hollywood finally catches on to the same idea, treating it as if it was the most original concept to come along since George Lucas invented the Force (in his bath, you may remember), though actually Hammer Films beat them to the punch back in 1969 with the bizarre *Moon Zero Two*.

Outland is the brainchild of Peter Hyams who wrote and directed it. Hyams sprung to prominence with *Capricorn One*, a movie with a good central idea — what if NASA decided to fake a space shot — but which failed to take it in any interesting direction and instead became just a glossy chase thriller. Not that the basic idea was an original one — there are

still people who believe that NASA's various moon landings were all concocted in a tv studio — but it's a shame Hyams didn't develop it more fully. Hyams' second movie was the ludicrous *Hanover Street*, just possibly one of the unintentionally funniest films of all time (though *Sphinx* comes a close second, and coincidentally both movies starred Lesley Anne Down). *Hanover Street* was an amazingly misjudged attempt to make an old fashioned, bitter-sweet romantic movie along the lines of *Waterloo Bridge* but spiced up with some modern cinematic conventions, such as sex and violence (but *tasteful* sex and violence). The result was embarrassing and I'm not surprised that its star, Harrison Ford, has so far avoided seeing it.

In a way *Outland* has the same flaws as *Hanover Street* (though it's not in the least funny) in that both movies are reworkings of older movies with very little in them that is actually original. The plot in *Outland*, as I said above, comes mainly from *High Noon* and the sets and space hardware owe a great deal to *Alien*. Sean Connery even gets to crawl through a ventilation system but unfortunately doesn't encounter any aliens along the way. Hyams really relies on the one single idea — that of juxtaposing a western story with a futuristic setting — to provide the chief source of interest for the movie. It all boils down to this one single gimmick, tricked out with a few predictable inversions like the hard drinking, cynical doctor hiding out on the frontier because of past failures (a familiar western

character) being a *woman* instead of a man. Other than that *Outland* is completely devoid of surprises or originality... and as an example of science fiction it barely deserves the name.

The point is that the sf element in *Outland* is totally unnecessary — it plays no part in the story and has no real reason for being there, apart from the afore-mentioned novelty value. The film could just as easily have been set in South Africa or Australia as its theme — the story of a man who makes a lone stand against corruption — has absolutely no need of the science fiction trappings. Okay, during the big shoot-out at the end Connery makes use of some of the outer space paraphernalia to overcome his opponents but that isn't enough to justify *Outland* as science fiction.

Hyams's message, if I can call it that, is that you can forget about life in outer space being exciting or glamorous — or anything like *Star Wars*. Instead, he says, it will be dull and monotonous, especially if you happen to be mining titanium on Io, Jupiter's third moon. Living conditions will be cramped and the sort of people who will be willing to endure this sort of existence will be the outcasts of society. In short, it will be exactly like life in any isolated mining community, the only difference being that if you go outside without your helmet people will have to come after you with sponges to clean up the mess.

All well and good as far as it goes — I'm sure the inhabitants of such a place ➤

won't wake up every morning filled with a sense of wonder and saying to themselves: "Gosh, here I am on lo orbiting Jupiter, the mysterious gas giant that is the biggest planet in the solar system and about which we know so little ... Wow!" But that doesn't mean the audience should feel *similarly* blasé about the situation while watching *Outland* yet that is the effect the picture produces. There is no communication of any sense of wonder at all, even in the early establishing shots showing the above-surface section of the mine against the background of a rather dull-looking Jupiter. By contrast, look at Kubrick's 2001 and the scenes where the Pan Am space shuttle is heading for the space station — Kubrick conveys the fact that the crew and passenger obviously find the experience commonplace and boring (they're all watching tv) but at the same time he conveys to the audience a feeling of awe and excitement.

Outland is a dull movie. It is slow-moving and its mood remains on one single, monotonous note. It doesn't even liven up during the scenes of violence. Admittedly a lot of money and technical skill has gone into its making and much of it is visible on the screen — the sets look solid and real and the special effects are fine — but the picture never really comes to life. It remains a mechanical construct consisting of borrowings from other movies and familiar movie 'types' instead of flesh and blood characters. The cast do what they can within the limitations of the script — Connery is adequate as O'Neil, Frances Sternhagen is good as Dr Lazurus and Peter Boyle is wasted as the villain Sheppard — but one fails to become involved with them. The characters they play are hollow ghosts from countless older films ...

Okay, George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, Brian DePalma, etc, also use old movies as a primary source of inspiration for their films but they bring some *extra* to the mixture that makes their work transcend, or at least enhance, what has gone before. There is no such extra ingredient in *Outland*. It is a beautifully photographed *facade* of a real movie.

Finally, two minor things that annoyed me. One is that I can't believe that anyone who has lived in space for any length of time would be so stupid as to blow a hole through a window knowing that there is nothing but a vacuum on the other side, which is what one of the villains does during the final shoot-out, with predictably explosive results. The other thing is that when we see men exposed to a vacuum their heads expand like balloons. Now this makes a grotesque shot but suggests that the human head is filled with nothing but air — an idea that is quite erroneous. Nasal and ear cavities would certainly rupture in such a situation but I would like to point out to the makers of *Outland* that the average human head is not as hollow as they presumably think it is. And that applies to the heads of audiences too. ●

Review by John Brosnan





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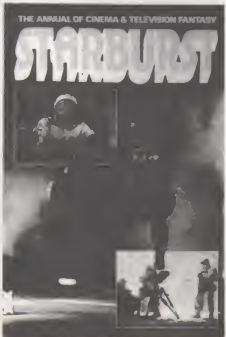
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A Starburst Interview by John Baxter

BUSTER CRABBE

It seemed highly improbable that Buster Crabbe should be in town to promote a book about exercise for those afflicted with arthritis; at 74, he looks lively enough to sprint through another thirteen episodes of *Flash Gordon* or punch out some rustler in the B-westerns of which he made an impressively large number during the forties. Retired to Arizona now (and looking, in his dark glasses and heavy tan, a far more effective duplicate of a Mafia don than Eddie Constantine managed in *The Long Good*

Friday) he is wealthy enough from his property investments and swimming-pool business to be philosophical about acting in general and the serials that made his name.

"I never wanted to be an actor. I was studying law, and making four dollars a week working part-time while I did it. If I hadn't happened to be a tenth of a second faster than that Frenchman in the 1932 Olympic 400 metres freestyle swimming nobody in Hollywood would have taken any notice of me. But I got a gold medal and Paramount

gave me a seven year contract with a one year option. It paid a hundred dollars a week. So I thought, if I stayed there for a year I could save a lot and never have to worry where the food was coming from. That year I put away \$3500.

"But I knew they were going to bounce me. They could get rid of me any time they wanted. So I kind of yakked away that first year, did what they told me to and was a good boy. They gave me a part in a jungle-type of thing: *King of the Jungle*. The only A-picture I

Left: Dale Arden (Jean Rogers) and Flash Gordon (Buster Crabbe) from the first *Flash Gordon* serial, 1936. Below: A tense scene from the same serial. Right: Princess Aura (Priscilla Lawson) holds Flash Gordon's (Buster Crabbe) attackers at bay. Far right: Buster Crabbe crashes into action as Buck Rogers in the 1936 serial of the same name.



ever made, as it turned out. About the end of the first year I got a call from my agent one night, a guy by the name of Morris Small. And he said 'Guess what?' I said 'We got the pink slip, right?'. And he said 'No!' He was more surprised than I was. I never thought they'd keep me on."

Crabbe first heard of *Flash Gordon* through Alex Raymond's strip. "When it came out in 1934, I started to follow it—find out what Ming was doing: Dale and the Clay Men and so on. One day in 1936, I happened to see in the *Hollywood Reporter*, right at the bottom of the page, a little squib announcing that Universal Studios were going to make a serial of 'Alex Raymond's popular comic strip *Flash Gordon*', and that if anyone was interested in trying out for the part to check in with the casting office at Universal the following Thursday afternoon, when they would run tests."

"I thought this was absolutely mad. You know; three crazy people, after all, in a rocket

ship, dashing off to Mongo and running into all sorts of things. I just didn't think it had a chance."

"Just before this, I'd been borrowed by Universal to make two westerns, and I got to know one of the youngsters in the casting office. I called him up and said that, while I didn't want to test for the thing, I was curious to see who was crazy enough to try out for it. So he got me on Stage 6 at Universal, where sixteen or seventeen fellers were waiting."

I recognised two of them right away; the others I disregarded. They weren't anyone's idea of *Flash Gordon*. One of the two was named George Bergman. A handsome, good-looking kid. All they had to do with him was bleach his hair and he was *Flash Gordon*. The other one, by some stretch of the imagination, might make a *Flash*. It was fortunate for him that he didn't get the part because a few months later John Ford picked him to play the juvenile lead in *The Hurricane* and that made him a star. Jon Hall.

"Fellow by the name of Henry McRae, who had made all the Universal serials back in the silent days, was supervising the tests. He knew me from the westerns I'd made there and he came over. We chatted a while, but I didn't mention that I thought the serial didn't have a chance. Then he floored me by saying 'How would you like the part?' I said 'I don't know. I like the comic strip but...' He said 'Well, you can have the part if you want it'. One-two-three; just like that. Never tried out for it. Never donned the outfit with the boots and the flash of lightning and whatever."

Once he took the job Universal set about not only getting him into costume but changing his appearance as well. "The thing I really hated was having to go to Perc Westmore's place to get my hair bleached. In those days everyone wore hats, and if I was in an elevator and a girl got in we'd always take off our hats. After my hair was bleached I never did it any more; it stayed jammed right down. I used to get whistles from guys when



they saw that bleached hair. If I'd have caught some of those guys I'd have killed them".

Production on **Flash Gordon** started in October 1936. "People have asked me 'I guess it was a lot of fun, wasn't it?' It was no fun at all! We ran from morning to night. It was six weeks in production. Make-up at seven every morning. We were on the set by eight. Work until noon time, knock off for an hour. Back after lunch again. Work until six. Knock off for half an hour or forty-five minutes for dinner, and back on the set again. The Screen Actors Guild wasn't as strong as it is now. You were supposed to get twelve hours between calls, but we never did. Never got through work until ten or ten-thirty every night. Six days a week, and when we were out on location seven days.

"To bring it in on time we had to average eighty-five set-ups a day with heavy equipment—the arc lights and the big floods, and hauling that tremendous big camera around. I really don't know how we did it, but

we did. We wrapped it up just before Christmas 1936 and they released the thing in February 1937. It cost, in round figures, \$400,000. The most expensive serial ever made. A big picture would cost double that, but serials they were bringing in for \$75,000 or less. I thought they were absolutely mad to spend that sort of money, but fortunately I was wrong".

That year's big grosser for Universal was the Deanna Durbin musical **Three Smart Girls**, but **Flash Gordon** was number two, mainly because the thirteen-episode chapter continued to generate income over the length of its run. Universal wasted no time over cashing in on this unexpected bonanza.

"We did a second story, **Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars**, in 1938, and, as you know, we did **Buck Rogers** in 1939. In 1940 the studio got us together again and they wanted to do one more. They were trying to decide whether they'd do a second **Buck Rogers** or a third **Flash Gordon**, and they decided on

another **Flash Gordon** because they had more stock stuff; two serials to steal stuff out of. I never forgave them for that. We roughed out **Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe** in five weeks. It was the weakest, far and away, of the three. I wasn't very proud of that one".

Universal did not stop at cribbing from previous serials. Sections of foreign films like Dimitri Buchowetzki's **The Midnight Sun** were lifted intact for all three **Flash** serials, and details copied from **Metropolis**, among other classics. The gates of Paris from William Dieterle's **Hunchback of Notre Dame** became the entrance to Ming's palace and the tunnels in all the serials had originally been built for Lon Chaney's **Phantom of the Opera**.

Crabbe takes little credit for the success of the series. "I never set out to be an actor. I was never interested in 'treading the boards'. It never entered my mind to take a dramatic course from some good coach. If you looked good in those days, that was enough.

"There were three main factors involved in



Right: The cast of **Flash Gordon** (1936) were reunited in the 1938 serial **Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars**, with Jean Rogers and Buster Crabbe. Top right: A blonde Dale Arden pleads for **Flash Gordon's** release in the original **Flash Gordon**. Centre right: The reissue poster for the feature film, compiled from the 1936 serial. Bottom right: Buster Crabbe in **Flash Gordon**. Far right: The reissue poster from the film version of **Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars**.

the serials' success. The actor they chose to play Ming, Charlie Middleton, was excellent. And Alex Raymond's original concept was wonderful. I got to know him when I went east to do personal appearances to promote the first serial. Originally he was an artist like Norman Rockwell. He liked to paint good-looking men and good-looking women in vivid colours. But he had a wife and five children to support and he told me 'I knew I had to do something to make money'. He decided if he could get away from the Earth and Earth-people he could do anything with characters and costumes he liked. "When King Features accepted the idea he went out and bought himself a sports car, a Jaguar. He'd always wanted one." (In 1956, Raymond was killed near his home in Greenwich, Connecticut, when he ran into a tree in that same car.)

"But the first factor was the Universal special effects departments. They had nothing to go on, with the exception of what

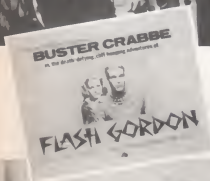
Raymond had drawn in the comic strip. They had to make everything up as they went along. The Light Bridge—they did that by scraping emulsion off the film to make a white line, then reducing the scraped areas bit by bit to show it getting longer or shorter. Pretty basic by today's standards.

"One day I read in the next day's script a scene where Ming has Flash tied up and, to demonstrate this ray gun of his, points it at a statuette on the table 'and the statuette melts to dust'. I thought 'This I have to see' so I went along to the special effects man and said 'How are you going to do this?' And he found a clever way to do it. He made a mould of the statue and filled it with a fine metal dust, which he magnetised through a magnet on the table. When he took the mould away the dust stayed in place as long as the magnet was on, but when he switched it off the whole thing just collapsed."

To Crabbe, his movie career was a mixed blessing. "I never felt I was part of the movie

business. I was always on the outside, looking over the fence, you know? There was a definite caste system in the old days; the stars only recognised other stars, or top producers or directors. A fellow who made serials for the kids or quickie *Billy the Kid* westerns . . . forget it! Nor was I ever one to think the spring was not going to run dry, I never trusted the picture business. I always had something going on the side.

"But I would have liked to find just one producer who had the guts to put me in with good company. They thought about it; for a time they billed me as Larry Crabbe," (his real Christian name is Clarence) "because I guess 'Buster Crabbe and Marlene Dietrich' would have looked sort of funny. But I never got the chance. And one day I thought, just after I'd done the first *Flash Gordon*, 'If this is what they think I do best, the hell with it. This is what I'll do'. And that's what I did." It was a decision for which millions of filmgoers have every reason to be grateful.



Frank LaLoggia is 26, and *Fear No Evil* is his first feature film. From the looks of it, LaLoggia's fifth feature film might be something impressive. *Fear No Evil* is pompous, silly and confusing, but it also has several interesting sequences and a great deal of conviction. The climax is a dizzying mixture of effects and action, almost impossible to follow or make sense of, but it is colourful and well-staged.

In a prologue, an old priest (*Jack Holland*) chases down and does battle with none other than Lucifer himself (*Richard Jay Silverthorn*), apparently vanquishing the demon. This battle takes place in and around a peculiar castle-like structure on an island in upper New York, and it's also the setting for the battle between good and evil at the climax.

Lucifer has the last laugh on the old priest. He has been reincarnated in Andrew, an intense, nervous boy who grows up in a household where his father (*Barry Cooper*) and mother (*Alice Sachs*) constantly battle over him. His father fears he knows just what Andrew is, but his mother loves the weird boy.

As the story proper begins, Andrew (*Stefan Arngren*) is a high school student unclear about his future and his powers. He's frightened of his abilities and is just beginning to know how to use them. By the end of the film he has given himself over to them completely.

In an early (but not early enough) scene, Andrew shows up late for a physical education class, and the teacher (*Phillip E. Roy*) punishes him by forcing him to do solitary pushups. As Arngren's head bops in and out of the frame, it's obvious that LaLoggia is setting up something, so when Arngren comes up with glowing eyes and a grin of demonic glee it's hardly surprising. He uses his powers to make the teacher kill another student with a basketball, probably a movie first.

While Andrew is consolidating his abilities, elsewhere Julie (*Kathleen Rowe McAllen*), a classmate of his, has learned from Mrs Buchanan (*Elizabeth Hoffman*) that they are the earthly incarnations of Gabriel and Michael, two of three angels sent by God to destroy Lucifer. The priest at the beginning was the third angel, and he's been tossed in jail for murder. Julie is surprised by this information. Who can blame her?

Eventually Andrew goes back to that island castle, becomes a demon physically, raises an army of the living dead (some of whom dig their way out of their graves with shovels), and runs around in a filmy gown which makes him look like a satanic transvestite. His sexual orientation problem is confused: to get revenge on a thuggish classmate (*Daniel Eden*), Andrew gives him woman's breasts.

Since the living dead are confined to the island, where they wipe out a party of high school kids, their usefulness seems limited. But Andrew's still having fun. On a beach nearby, an annual Passion Play is taking place. Andrew causes people's hair to start bleeding and lightning bolts to crash to the Earth. I honestly wouldn't have been surprised if the people who fled into the ocean for protection had been attacked by sharks; everything else from recent movies seemed to be baffling the innocent. The hapless actor playing Jesus ends up both crucified for real and freed.

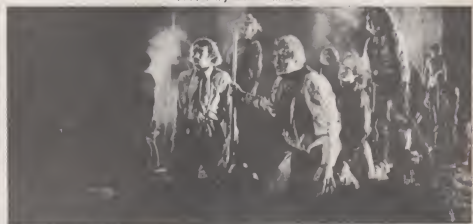
Meanwhile, Mrs Buchanan and Julie, armed with an ornate cross, row madly over to the island and battle the shrieking, minging Andrew in a climax laden with colourful but inappropriate special effects.

Frank LaLoggia seems to have solved the problems of his film visually rather than dramatically. It was conceived as a stylish, colourful horror epic with scads of dazzling effects. Unfortunately, LaLoggia was also required to write a story tying all this together. It's a shame he decided to use the Son-of-the-Devil storyline, as it has been done to death with *Rosemary's Baby* and many other films. But LaLoggia feels that because he derived his story elements from the Book of Revelations, he's being novel.

Well, novelty is good but it isn't everything. It's novel to have a devil who dresses in a black nightgown, screams constantly, and looks like he's on his way to a midnight screening of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Novel yes, but it's also silly, a badly

Fear No Evil

Review by Bill Warren



Top: Lucifer's army of the Living Dead menaces the holidaymakers on a remote island in upstate New York. Above: Richard Jay Silverthorn plays Leviathan, an early incarnation of the demon Lucifer.

judged effect.

Peter Kuran's company did the elaborate but cartoony effects at the climax that look more appropriate for a Disney comedy than for the ultimate confrontation between Good and Evil.

The photography by Fred Goodich is imaginatively conceived, but it usually fails to achieve the effects he was obviously striving for. He often wants huge shadow shots from back-lit actors to slice through the foggy sets, but he overlights them and the shadows die a few feet in front of the actors' waving arms. Elsewhere, the photography seems overly decorative, but all in all it's not a bad try for a low-budget film.

Director LaLoggia tries several interesting ideas. In an early scene, we see the shadow of Andrew on a wall as he studies a book; the book is in front of the camera but Andrew is invisible. From Andrew's birth until the story proper begins, we see the passage of time in the aging and degeneration of his parent's house in a series of lap dissolves. And though it doesn't make much sense, a lot of the apocalyptic climax is handsome and exciting.

Fear No Evil is badly paced until the swift climax, and many scenes, particularly those between Elizabeth Hoffman and Kathleen Rowe McAllen, drag on endlessly. LaLoggia apparently felt that the religious folderol they chat about was essential to the story, but he's very wrong. Much of the acting is amateurish including, unfortunately, that of Stefan Arngren in the central role. He's way too intense and moody, and often seems funny rather than fiendish.

But *Fear No Evil* is still worth seeing. LaLoggia tries for big issues and different effects. He's a director with imagination and perhaps some style. He

doesn't yet show the control or discipline necessary to make a successful film, but those are likely to come in time. He could be a talent to watch.

Fear No Evil (1981)

Stefan Arngren (Andrew), Elizabeth Hoffman (Michael/Margaret Buchanan), Kathleen Rowe McAllen (Gabrielle/Julie), Frank Birney (Father Daly), Daniel Eden (Tony), Jack Holland (Rebel/Father Damon), Barry Cooper (Mr Williams), Alice Sachs (Mrs Williams), Paul Haber (Mark), Roslyn Guggino (Mama), Richard J. Silverthorn (Lucifer), Marie Ann Simpson (Brenda), Joyce Bumpus (Susan), Patricia Decelis (Berle), Chris Devincenzo (Richard), Malcolm Haggis (Tommy), Robert Kuhn (Steve), Don O'Neil (Mr Altman), Deanne Gordon (Ignatance counselor), Phillip E. Roy (Igum teacher), Alexandra Cleveland (student teacher), Jeff Richter (The Christ), Pam Morris (Virgin Mary), Toby Gold (reporter), Dick Burt (mayor), Frank Montasanto (The Hermit), Melissa Rogers (Mara), Baby Fisher (Baby Andrew), Jon LaLoggia (drunk).

Written and directed by Frank LaLoggia. Art director Carl Zilio. Music by Frank LaLoggia and David Spear. Edited by Edna Ruth Paul. Director of Photography Fred Goodich. Sound effects supervisor Peter Kuran. Photographic effects by Jim Seay and Jerome Seven. Effects animation by Chris Casady. Pyrotechnics/special animation by Susan Turner. Animators Kathy Keen, Pam Vick and Richard Silverthorn. Optical effects supervisor Robert Brown. Associate producers Donald P. Berchers and Carl R. Reynolds. Produced by Frank LaLoggia and Charles M. LaLoggia. Executive producer Charles M. LaLoggia.



Top: Father Damon (Jack Holland), the Earthly incarnation of the angel Raphael; battles against Lucifer himself. Above: Margaret Buchanan (Elizabeth Hoffman), the incarnation of the angel Mikhail, prays for guidance. Right: Armed with an ornate crucifix, Julie/Gabrielle (Kathleen Rowe McAllen) confronts Lucifer at the climax of *Fear No Evil*.



The new movie stars Lucas' old nemesis Spielberg and New York, in an action movie to rival some of the world's best. The film is a tribute to the US authorship and the spirit of the film. The film is a tribute to the US authorship and the spirit of the film. The film is a tribute to the US authorship and the spirit of the film.

RAIDERS



Above left: Indiana Jones (Harrison Ford) and Marion Ravenwood (Karen Allen) are tied to a stake as the Nazis prepare to open the Ark. Above centre: British actor Ronald Lacey plays the sadistic Nazi, Toht, who pursues Indiana Jones from Nepal to the Tanis dig in Egypt. Above right: Harrison Ford prepares to make the swing over a pit during the opening scenes of the film. The film crew can be seen in the background. Left: Sallah (John Rhys-Davies) and Indy (Harrison Ford) discover the Lost Ark concealed in the ruins of the city of Tanis.



of the LOST ARK

All the best ideas seem obvious as soon as someone else has thought them up. This is the case with *Raiders of the Lost Ark* — it now seems obvious that a great idea for a movie would be to take a story that is a pure distillation of practically every pulp adventure magazine published during the 1930s and give it the big-budget/big screen treatment after the manner of *Star Wars* — but if anyone else apart from George Lucas had tried to get this project off the ground I doubt if any of the Hollywood companies would have shown a flicker of interest in it. I also doubt that if anyone other than Lucas and Steven Spielberg had made this picture it would be anything near the success it is.

I have the grim suspicion that film producers in Hollywood and places elsewhere are looking at *Raiders* and saying to themselves: "Hmmm, that looks easy. We just get an adventure story with lots of action, a few jokes, set it in the 1930s, mix in some occult mumbo jumbo and away we go. Of course we can only afford a budget of 200,000 US dollars and instead of Spielberg we'll get my brother-in-law Sid to direct it but otherwise the suckers in the cinemas will never know the difference." Well, when the flood of cheap *Raiders* imitations starts to arrive we suckers are going to know the

difference because there is much more to *Raiders* than meets the eye.

Lucas's and Spielberg's biggest achievement with *Raiders* (and one should also credit Lawrence Kasdan, who wrote the screenplay, and Philip Kaufman, who co-wrote the original story with Lucas) is that they have mixed all the above ingredients just right. But most importantly they have treated the whole thing with just the right amount of humour, which is the most difficult task of all to accomplish with a picture like this. It would have been so easy to get the balance wrong and end up with two hours of High Camp.

That's exactly what happened when George Pal brought the 1930s pulp hero *Doc Savage* to the screen in 1975, and the same thing applies to the De Laurentiis version of *Flash Gordon*. But while there are plenty of camp elements in *Raiders* they aren't treated self-consciously. Instead they are presented with a straight face and the viewer can either enjoy them or ignore them, depending on his or her age and mental development (and the two aren't necessarily connected). In this respect *Raiders* even improves on *Superman II*, though if it comes to the crunch I think I'd have to rate *Sukey* the higher of the two (but that's just a personal preference, folks!).

One hopes that someone will tie De Laurentiis to a chair and make him watch *Raiders* several times until he gets the point about how this sort of movie should be approached. But I suspect that cultural and generation gaps will prevent him, and other film makers of his ilk, from ever grasping the point. The secret is, of course, that Spielberg and Lucas have an unashamedly *personal* involvement in the material and their obvious enjoyment of putting it on the screen is communicated to the audience. They may have their tongues in their cheeks but they don't treat their material cynically, unlike some film makers I could mention ...

The marvellous self-contained opening sequences in *Raiders* set the tone for the rest of the movie — they are a glorious mixture of spectacular, fast-paced action and sly humour. It all begins like some White Hunter film of the 1930s with the archeologist hero, Indiana Jones (Harrison Ford, who is surprisingly good in the role) hacking his way through the jungle with two shifty guides (soon to become one) and then entering a gloomy cave to obtain a precious carved head which is protected by an amazing variety of lethal devices. It's the sheer abundance of these devices and the way they are unleashed upon Jones and friend — ➤



swiftly building up in visual absurdity (though never *too* absurd) to culminate in what appears to be a giant ball bearing that chases Jones with the speed of an express train as the cave self-destructs around him — that makes clear to us *Raiders* isn't simply a 1981 remake of a 1930s movie but an exhilarating *celebration* of the entire action/adventure genre, incorporating the pulps, old movie serials and comic books.

The light touch is maintained when we rejoin Jones back in pre-World War 2 America. Like *Superman* he is two separate people — when abroad he is the tough man-of-action with a leather jacket and whip coiled permanently at his hip but when at home he is a mild-mannered, but handsome, college professor who is obviously adored by every female member of his class.

After this brief exposure to the intellectual side of his persona the story proper begins with Jones being requested by the government to track down the lost Ark of the Covenant which contains the fragments of the two stone tablets on which the 10 Commandments were inscribed. It seems that the Ark contains a great power that could be harnessed for destructive purposes and Hitler is anxious to get his hands on it (when I first heard about *Raiders* I presumed the Ark

referred to in the title was Noah's and couldn't understand why Hitler wanted it . . .).

The first step in the quest involves locating a certain gold medallion that contains a vital map. The medallion is in the possession of none other than an old girlfriend of Jones' called Marion (played by Karen Allen, last seen trying to cope with Al Pacino's leather fetish in *Cruising*). Marion is a rather tough young lady who runs a bar in, of all places, Nepal, and judging from the exterior shots her establishment must be the last opportunity to fill your tank before Tibet. As an indication of just how tough she is our first sight shows her participating in a drinking competition with the local drunk, who is built like a Yeti, which she wins. She makes Lois Lane look like a push-over.

Even Indiana Jones has some trouble persuading her to cooperate but after a violent and spectacular intrusion by a bunch of comic book Nazis Marion sees the light and accompanies Jones to Cairo with the medallion. In Cairo there is more violent action, including one of the best visual jokes in the picture (which I won't spoil by describing to you), but Indiana succeeds in locating the Ark and goes about excavating it right under the noses of an entire German army. Alas, the Nazis

then get the upper hand when Indiana is betrayed by his old archeology rival, Belloq (*Paul Freeman*) and sealed, with Marion, in a tomb along with around a million poisonous snakes (a fear of snakes is Indiana's only weak spot), not to mention a crowd of mummified corpses in an adjacent tomb.

After escaping from the tomb there is a well-choreographed fight involving Indiana, a giant German and a Flying Wing aircraft that goes out of control, followed by an even more spectacular action sequence during which the stuntmen perform some truly harrowing stunts on a speeding truck (and even under a speeding truck).

There's a brief romantic interlude on a ship but as in the *Star Wars* movies Lucas makes sure that the 'mushy stuff' is treated with irreverence. After some clowning around Indiana actually falls asleep when Marion finally gets him into bed . . .

But then the Nazis pop up again, this time in a U-boat, and grab both the Ark and Marion. However, in James Bond style Indiana hitches a ride on the outside of the sub all the way to his secret base (presumably holding his breath for long periods during the journey).

After more action the climax occurs when the Nazis open the Ark in a desert



Opposite top left: Merion (Karen Allen) finds herself surrounded by ancient rotting corpses. Opposite below left: Indiana Jones (Harrison Ford) calmly brushes a horde of tarantula spiders from his bearer's back. Opposite right: A member of the special effects team demonstrates the abilities of one of the mechanical dummies used in the climax of the film. Left: Indiana Jones gains access to the German archeological dig, disguised as an Arab. Above: Indy ducks behind a German plane during his fight with a huge German soldier. Below: Marion holds her winnings from the drinking competition which takes place in her Nepelese saloon.

canyon and by this time the picture has changed its mood, the humour being left behind. The sequences showing what happens after the Ark is opened are a bizarre mixture of DeMille's Ten Commandments, Fantasia (the Beld Mountain section), the climax of Close Encounters and even Scanners.

It's all very impressive and a considerable achievement for effects supervisor Richard Edlund but I dread to think how some of the more literal-minded fans are going to react to it. Very soon, I'm afraid, we will see the first lengthy treatise attempting to prove a connection between the power in the Ark and the Force, etc, etc (I must admit my big fear was that Yoda would pop out of the Ark).

As with Star Wars there is much fun to be had in spotting the filmic references in Raiders. Apart from the ones I've already mentioned, plus The Mask of Fu Manchu which also centered around an archeological hunt (for the death mask and sword of Genghis Khan) and similarly ended with a death ray machine going out of control and wiping out Fu's followers, I think Raiders owes most to the James Bond movies. But then the early Bonds themselves exploited the basic format of the old movie serials, dressing up the non-stop action, hair-breadth escapes, etc,

with a veneer of sophistication and tongue-in-cheek humour that enabled "adults" to enjoy the fun without feeling guilty about it.

But though Raiders may be nothing more than a Bond movie set in the 1930s it has more style, panache and wit than any of the recent Bonds, including For Your Eyes Only. It also has a sense of narrative pace and sheer exuberance that has been missing from the Bonds for a long time and shows up just how lifeless and mechanical the Bond series has become.

As I write this I haven't seen any reviews of Raiders so I'm curious to know how the more intellectual critics are going to react to it. I suspect that while admitting its technical artistry some will complain that it's depressing to see so much skill and money go into the making of a film that is essentially mindless, labelling it as a further indication of the intellectual and artistic bankruptcy effecting the new breed of young American film makers who can only make films by cannibalising the old Hollywood carcass instead of producing films that are genuinely original etc, etc. Well, all this may be true and no doubt I will feel guilty as hell when I go and see Raiders for the second and probably third time...



INSIDE CRONENBERG

STARBURST PRESENTS THE SECOND HALF OF THE TWO PART INTERVIEW WITH DAVID CRONENBERG, BEST KNOWN FOR HIS HORROR FILMS *SHIVERS*, *RABID*, *THE BROOD* AND, MORE RECENTLY, *SCANNERS*. PHIL EDWARDS TALKED TO CRONENBERG, WHEN HE VISITED LONDON RECENTLY, ABOUT HIS LIFE, HIS WORK AND HIS FUTURE PROJECTS.

Starburst: All your films have spotlighted a kind of corrupt sexuality, but it is something that is absent from *Scanners*...

David Cronenberg: Yes it is, although with *The Brood* the sexual element had more to do with procreation. There is still some of that in *Scanners*, the scene with the pregnant woman.

That was the scene that really gave me the creeps...

That's what a lot of people have said here. And yet in the States that scene is never mentioned. For example, that seance scene does get giggles from certain audiences but I don't mind because it's the kind of magic mushroom in the centre and the humour was not unintentional. When we were doing it I said "You know what we're doing, this is the sixties, we're all sitting around going *OM* together", and of course my actors all knew what I was talking about. So we were very aware of that and that had a certain cast about it for a certain age group of the North American audience. It's not necessary for that to be there for the film to work but I think it's there. I have the same problem as Milton did in *Paradise Lost*. Obviously the bad scanners are more interesting than the good scanners. But I didn't want to stay too much on the (good guys) and I couldn't help feeling that they were a little soppy. I didn't want to hear too much of their philosophy and I couldn't make it as interesting, even to myself, as the darker side.

I don't think it would have worked. It would have come over something like Scientology. It's funny that you mention that because in an earlier version of the script I had bad scanners having a front called "*Materiology*" which was a Scientology-like church that they used as a front, and of course, being telepathists, they could be very effective at doing what Scientologists would like to be able to do. That idea got lost.

The end of the script that I read was weak—the duel didn't exist at that point.

Well you may have read the expurgated version. Some of the drafts were for showing to people who would have been bothered by the blood. It wasn't done by me, it was done by a secretary or somebody. I haven't even seen an entire version of the script. For me it doesn't exist, because I was writing it in pieces, out of sequence, and I never really said "OK. Here is the script, now let's go out and shoot it". There are many versions of the script.

When you were six months into editing you shot another week of the duel. What did you add at that point and why did you add it? There were some photos around of a guy with some sparks coming out of his head. That was from the first version. Our lack of preparation really caught up with us there, that was the main reason for reshooting. I



really just had more time to consider what I wanted to happen and to go back to that "sense of the body". In *The Brood* it's psychosomatic in terms of "my brain, my body". In *Scanners* it's psychosomatic in terms of "my brain, your body". And so, getting back to that basic concept of how to make manifest the power of a scanner, which is basically internal, the concept of what the duel really should be had more time to grow—and I'm sure that it would have been very similar if I'd had time to write it into the original script. There were a lot of things that

we tried in the first version of the duel. The thing with the sparks was just another way to get the character into flames, but it was just very ill-conceived and hastily conceived and it just didn't work. I don't remember exactly what we did shoot.

At what point did Dick Smith come in? He was consulted in pre-production. We all went down to his place in upper New York State, my art director and special effects people and so on, and we went over the script and talked about how we would do these effects and the possible problems involved.



He talked to my special effects people about materials as well. So he was in on it as a consultant right from the beginning. He would have come up to work on the set, but he was just too exhausted. He'd been working on *Altered States* for eleven months and he had had it.

I found the Dr Ruth character incredibly ambiguous. I was never sure whether he was good or bad. Was that intentional?

Sure. It's perhaps more subtle than what happens with the Oliver Reed character in *The Brood* but even he turns out to be much less "black".

They're very similar characters.

Yes, they are. I think part of the ambiguity is that he's not sure. He doesn't think of himself as totally bad either and has a certain guilt and regret about some of the things he's done, as we all do, I suppose.

I didn't even think Revok was particularly "bad".

Well, did Idi Amin think himself bad? Seeing interviews with him, he was very rational in a demented kind of way about how logical it all was, and was suggesting that if you were in his position you would probably do the same thing. I think it's a very unusual and strange person who thinks of himself as the embodiment of evil and in fact a person who does that is probably being incredibly melodramatic and probably is not the embodiment of evil at all. It then becomes a pose. In that sense, I tend to take Dr Ruth's word for it about what he is and Revok's word for it. It always fascinates me when someone is so logical, and has arguments that are all singly perfectly logical, follow one another, lead you over the edge of insanity and you hardly even notice, until they say, "My God, how did I get here having murdered 12 people?" You think of famous psychotics you have known. They all have incredible rationales for why they've done what they've done and it all seemed very straight-forward at the time and suddenly here they are in the middle of a media storm after just shooting someone. It's all a mystery. That's my approach to my characters rather than to say "I will assign goodness to Cameron Vale and I will assign badness to Daryl Revok and I will show they are two halves of the same personality", (which in a way I'm doing), "and I will show good is better than evil". It's not my approach.

I interpreted it to mean that science was the bad guy. Keller was a bad character.

Yes, but even then at the moment where he kills Dr Ruth there's genuine remorse in his eyes, I think.

Is that what you were aiming for?

Yeh.

I was sorry to see Ruth go.

Yes. Well, it was time. Certainly I didn't have a lot of sympathy for the multinational arms corporation but on the other hand that doesn't really represent science particularly as a certain kind of power politics kind of guy. I don't have much sympathy for ConSec. On the other hand, ConSec to me does not represent science, it represents a particular use of science which is not the only use of science. The drug company which propagated *ephemorol* is like the drug company which allowed thalidomide to go on the market without testing it properly. I don't have much sympathy for them either. But that again is not science *per se*.

Was it a deliberate parallel between thalidomide and ephemorol?

No. It was just a structure that occurred to me. I'm not saying anything about thalidomide particularly. It was just the spark that led me to come up with ephemorol. In a way I'm talking about the scanners being thalidomide children, only their deformity is internal and ►

relatively invisible as is opposed to external. So there is a reference but I wouldn't say it was a parallel.

*What do you feel that you did in **Scanners** that wasn't done in **The Fury**.*

Oh God, just about everything. I don't think **The Fury** did very much at all. First of all, there weren't any scanners in **The Fury** because a scanner is someone who has a very specific form of ESP, which he can put a name to, which he is aware of and which has its limits. In **The Fury**, one minute they're doing psychokinetic things, lifting inanimate objects, etc, which is something that scanners can't do. One minute you have a guy levitating himself and the next minute he's falling to his death from a two storey building.

To me, **The Fury** was totally confused and there was no real conception of what this ESP was. It shifted from scene to scene. One minute they're saying if you touch someone while you're doing this thing they're going to bleed from various pores—even that was kind of vague and the next minute they're doing it and nobody's bleeding and it's totally forgotten. I thought there was no conception of what telepathy would really be like experientially. No conception of what one person could do to another. I think the psychic duel at the end of **Scanners** is not entirely unexpected in the structure which has been set up in the rest of the film, whereas John Cassevetes' body exploding was a very spectacular effect in one sense, and yet the audience that I was with was really upset when they saw that ending. They couldn't believe that the credits were rolling up after that and that *that* was the end of the film. They were right, of course, because nothing had been resolved or pulled together. The other thing is that there are very few films about ESP, despite the fact that sf literature is full of books about it and part of the reason is that it's very internal, something that a novel really lends itself well to exploring and something that is not so unvisual that it's hard to figure ways to make mental power manifest in a film. I was certainly faced with some of the same problems that De Palma was, but I think it's entirely in keeping with **Stereo** which I made in 1969 and was about experiments in artificially created telepathy. Also with my other films, that it should be a very physical, *bodily* manifestation of mental states. It's not something that I cribbed from **The Fury**. To me it's an obvious approach to ESP. There was a young French critic who I think completely believes I ripped off **Scanners** from **The Fury**, and he almost had me convinced! Then some other critics I talked to said they didn't think of **The Fury** once when they saw it because they think it's totally different. If you give a three line summary there are obvious connections and I don't deny those. It's just that it's the same with the things in **Shivers** which remind people of **Night of the Living Dead**. We're mining the same vein rather than ripping each other off.

What we have today is a group of young film makers who have grown up on movies. All their references are filmic.

Yes, except that, you see, I haven't been brought up with films in the same way that a lot of young American directors have. I went to the movies just as a matter of course. It was never a self-conscious thing. I also read a lot. I was not brought up to worship the dolly shots of Howard Hawks and Wells or anyone else and I was not brought up to worship the might of Alfred Hitchcock. I saw all of Hitchcock's films as they came out. I also saw the **Durango Kid** and **Hopalong Cassidy** and **Shane** and **The Three Stooges** comedies and pirate movies, which I love. The other thing that you're saying is true. There's more film





literacy in general than there ever was before. There's also a certain self-consciousness about it. But I really try very hard when I'm writing my scripts—I'm not thinking about films at all. I'm thinking of words and literature at that point more than film and I really try very hard to keep in touch with my own sub-conscious wherever it is at that time. If, after it's out there, I see similarities with other films, it's a matter of honour for me not to change it, even if people say it looks like another film. I don't think that's dishonourable anyway, but it would be dishonourable to my own instincts to change something. I find that more often. When it gets to the final scene in *Shivers* I *knew* people were going to think of *Night of the Living Dead*, but that is where the narrative led me and it felt very right and proper for the film to be there.

I think George Romero keeps remaking Night of the Living Dead anyway.

I think that's what happens when you lose touch with your own instinct. It's the same with Tobe Hooper. He hasn't made another film like *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. He's lost touch with the source of his own power.

Funhouse is the best film he's done since Texas Chainsaw.

I'm sure that it is. I was offered the script of *Funhouse*. It didn't interest me. I like working from my own scripts. If I do someone else's script I'll never see what I would have written in the same time period and secondly, *Funhouse* seemed pretty conventional to me. That's not to say that it won't be a good movie. It's one thing to see a film, it's another to spend two years making it. You really have to want to do it and so far I haven't found anyone else's script that made me want to put that much time into it.

What would you think of making a more traditional genre film?

I really hope that in a sense I'm creating a new genre of my own. It's not so much a social distaste for being lumped in with other people, it's just that I feel there's something else going on entirely. To work on a werewolf film, for example, means automatically that you have to deal with the mythology of that sort of sub-genre. It's the same as *Frankenstein*. In a way I would spend more time fighting it. You'd have to be conscious of other films in a way that I don't like to be. I think it makes you so self-conscious that you start to worry more about that rather than what you really should be worried about, which is the *Black Lagoon* of the unconscious. You know *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*?—the *Black Lagoon* is the unconscious and the *Creature* is all those things that I want to get in touch with. I think it would make me too worried about predecessors and not leave me with enough energy to deal with the actual issues which are unconscious issues. Not that I wouldn't mind seeing a werewolf movie again, or even a mummy movie. I used to love mummy movies.

Finally, you said you think you're hopefully creating a new genre. How would you describe it?

I think that's better left to you. I don't have enough objectivity to analyse it at this point. Maybe after another five films it will become clearer.

With special thanks to David Cronenberg and to Mike Wheeler of Movieworld Promotions and Jack Gray of New Realm Distributors.



Opposite top: A scene cut from the finished version of *Scanners*. During the psychic duel at the climax of the movie, Revok causes a shower of sparks to shoot from the top of Vale's (Stephen Lack) head. Opposite centre: In the opening moments of *Shivers*, a doctor murders a young girl, cuts her stomach open, pours in a bottle of nitric acid, then cuts his own throat. Opposite below: One of the victims in *Rabid* claims a new convert. Top: Samantha Eggar reveals the awful truth in *The Brood*. Her psychic offspring are actually grown externally, rather than gestated like normal children. Above left: Vale, the hero of *Scanners*, examines the dead body of murdered sculptor. Above: Marilyn Chambers plays the lead character in David Cronenberg's *Rabid*.

VIDEO SCENE

In *Starburst 34*, reader Alan Fletcher's question about ITC's package of tv movies in America was basically answered in my *Video Scene* article where I pointed out that Precision Video has the two episodes he mentions namely, *Alien Attack* and *Destination Moon Base Alpha*, which we have already seen on tv over here. Now that Precision have made their tapes available for rental it will be reasonably inexpensive for those of you who missed these to see them, without the commercial breaks, of course.

Two of the big space movies have now become available on video since I last wrote, that is *Alien* (from *Magnetic Video*—sale only) and *Star Trek* from CIC Video (sale or rental). There is very little point in me writing any more about either of those films, except to say *Alien* on the small tv screen, without stereo sound, is a different thing from seeing it on the Dominion in Tottenham Court Road, London.

A recent addition to the genre is also in the *Alien* mould of destructive creatures from an alien planet. *The Warning* comes from Guild Home Video and features a collection of cinema old-timers fighting off what seems to be tomato pancakes which a rather unpleasant tall alien tosses about. As usual we are in one of those small out-of-the-way areas of America where low-budget movies always take place and

Jack Palance is our hero. He's an old time hunter who decides to turn the tables on the alien by hunting him, he's much hindered by Martin Landau as a crazy Vietnam war veteran who thinks that everything and everyone is a Communist plot to take over the world. It seems that the alien is just out for a bit of fun, seeing how many humans he can kill to while away the hours but our Jack is more than a match for him. He has a wonderfully simple way of getting rid of the deadly pancakes, he just gets out his scout's pen-knife and peels them off. As you can perhaps tell I was not really impressed by the film, which has more risible moments than necessary.

After those tomato pancakes one can turn to tomatoes proper. *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes*, as doubtless many of you will know, was a nominee in Harry and Michael Medved's book *The Golden Turkey Awards*, in the category *The Worst Vegetable Movie Of All Time*; it is probably not revealing any secrets to say that it was beaten out of that title by *Attack of the Mushroom People*.

Tomatoes was made as I said, as a spoof film by a group of young San Diego filmmakers, Steve Peace and John De Bello producing, the latter directing and the couple of them joined by Costa Dillon for the script. Once again we have a small town bearing the brunt of an attack by large tomatoes which consume everything they manage to roll onto. If you want to sample this, it is available from VPD (sale or rental).

Now a few words about some real nasties that have found their way onto video recently, for following the fashion in the cinema it is the horror/thrillers which are proving to be doing well. Thus we have John Carpenter's *Halloween* available from VPD on the one

by PETER CARGIN



Two scenes from Roy Ward Baker's *Asylum*, now available from Guild Video. Top: Barbara Parkins. Above: The ever-present Peter Cushing.

hand and Michael Armstrong's 1970 co-production with Germany, *Mark of the Devil* on the other. Herbert Lom, Udo Keir, starred in this interview release which is, as its title indicates all about our good old friend, the witchfinder. All ends pretty nastily with the baddie getting away and the goody receiving the unwelcome attentions of the villagers who are on hand at the appropriate time to lynch the nearest innocent bystander.

Better and more recent films now coming onto video include, George Romero's

Zombies—Dawn of the Dead, not to be confused with *Zombies—Flesh Eaters*, also on video from VPCO. Then there are two excellent thrillers from Canadian David Cronenberg, *Raid* the one with porn star Marilyn Chambers in the lead and *Shivers*. All three titles will be available from Alpha Video, a newcomer to the video scene, but actually the video side of Alpha Films.

Incidentally Cronenberg's latest *Scanners*, is now available from Guild Home Video.

Next let me mention a couple of videos recently available, first is an oldie, Roy Ward Baker's *Asylum*, made in 1972 (and also known in America as *House of Crazies*) which comes from Guild Home Video and *A Boy and His Dog*, an American fantasy film that has never been seen in this country which has a cult following in America as it is based on a story by Harlan Ellison. *A Boy and His Dog* was covered in full in *Starburst 28*.

Asylum is one of those portmanteau films with four (or strictly speaking three and a half) tales in one: Dr Martin (*Robert Powell*) comes to take up a post at an asylum, only to find that the head of the place has apparently gone mad himself. His associate (*Patrick Magee*) tells Martin that he'll get the job if he can identify which of the four inmates is the mad doctor, this allows us to get the four mini-stories: Barbara Parkins in the first who is the mistress of Richard Todd has trouble with the chopped up limbs of the latter's wife; Barry Morse as a peevish Jewish tailor gets more than he bargained for when Peter Cushing asks him to make a rather special suit for his son; Charlotte Rampling suffers from schizophrenia and believes that her other half, played by Britt Ekland, has killed her brother and nurse and finally Herbert Lom is trying to literally breathe life into some puppets he has made in his own likeness. The trouble with these short stories is that there is no time to create any depth of characterisation and we are left with whatever twist the script can conjure up for us.

A final footnote: animation has of course been an ideal medium for conveying the fantastic, although it has generally been less concerned with ideas than fantastic situations that could not be depicted by conventional means in the cinema.

Gottfried Burger's romantic classic story about the fabulous *Baron Munchausen* has inspired the cinema a number of times: Melies in 1911, Emile Cohl a couple of years later, the famous version by J. von Baky in 1943 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the UFA studios with Hans Albers in the title role and then a marvellous version by the Czech director Karel Zeman in 1962, which combined live action and special effects. Now on video we have a complete animation version by the Frenchman Jean Image, which is suitable for all the family; *Munchausen* is basically a series of tall stories, whereby the Baron and his dog set off for the land of Trukeshan and along the way pick up a number of curious characters all blessed with one special attribute, Hercules with strength, Nimrod with far-reaching sight, Hurricane with the ability to blow things down, etc. The most amusing sequence in a rather stiffly told story is where the birds turn the tables on the humans and put them in cages whilst they are on trial.

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BATTLETRUCK

A Special Report by Phil Edwards



Harley Cokliss, once set as director of *Thongor in the Valley of Demons*, has finally found backing for his own first full-length feature film, *Battletruck*. Set to commence shooting in the south island of New Zealand on July 27th, the film is an action-adventure story set in the not-too-distant future.

The origin of *Battletruck* dates back to 1975 when Cokliss was in Los Angeles shooting interview programmes for the BBC series, *Arena*. One of the programme's subjects was Roger Corman. After the filming was completed, Cokliss briefly told the famed producer/director the basic outline of *Battletruck*. Corman was enthused and offered Cokliss a tentative deal.

The American-born director wrote a first draft of the script and various production negotiations were set in motion. Nearly six years and several more scripts were to pass before Cokliss was able to bring the production to fruition. Several writers were brought in to work on the screenplay and when the film finally hits the screens sometime next year the credits will read: Screenplay by Peter McDougall, based on an original story by Cokliss and John Beech.

Battletruck is an American-New Zealand co-production. The New Zealanders are producers Lloyd Phillips and Rob Whitehouse. Phillips picked up the Oscar this year for the *Best Short Film*, *The Dollar Bottom* and Whitehouse has just completed work on a horror film in NZ called *Scarecrow*, starring John Carradine.



Top: Director Harley Cokliss, who is currently working on his first full-length feature film, *Battletruck*. Above: John Bolton is responsible for the full-colour promotional artwork for *Battletruck* (see opposite page).

Cokliss is understandably cautious about revealing the nature of the film, although he is adamant that the feature will not be another *Damnation Alley*. He did reveal however that it will contain some truly spectacular action and stuntwork, some of which has never been attempted on the screen before.

Equally cautious about the look of the film, Cokliss brought in the talented John Bolton, with whom he had worked briefly on preproduction of *Thongor*. Bolton painted the promotional poster for *Battletruck* as well as doing storyboards. Cokliss, a great admirer of Bolton's work, also hopes that the artist will be responsible for a comic book adaptation, should one appear and that Bolton might have some input when the film poster advertising campaign is designed.

Casting for *Battletruck* has not yet been finalised, although Cokliss hopes to have the main leads of the film played by Americans and under the terms of the co-production deal the remainder of the cast would be New Zealanders.

Shooting takes place in some of the most rugged country in New Zealand which Cokliss describes as among the most beautiful and unspoiled he has seen anywhere.

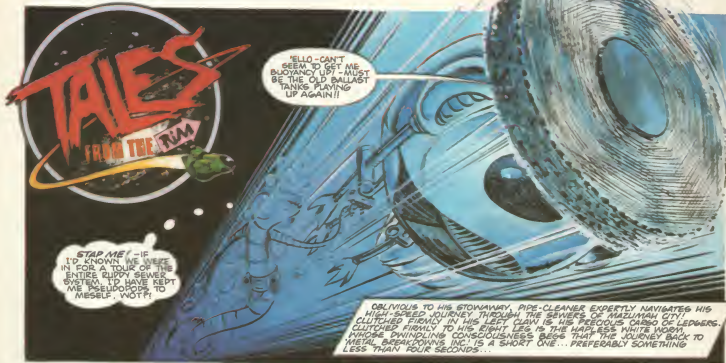
Cokliss retains creative control over the film, though as usual, Corman, as distributor in North America has final say on the cutting of the film for that territory. However, Cokliss foresees no "cutting room battles" with Corman.

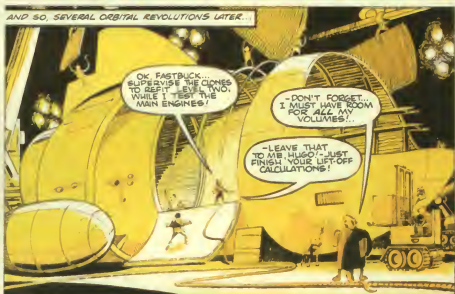
Battletruck is set for a Spring 1982 release.



Colman

What has gone before: A 7-tonner, space probe (also known as before, has returned to its launch pad in Mars. An 8-ton 30-tonner) is in the intervening years, however, a thriving repair business has been established on that very site and the craft's landing is... to say the least... a bit of a fiasco. Amid the resulting destruction, the workers find out that the spaceship, while able to converse, refuses to speak due to an ancient trauma. So, engineers relating to the craft's purpose have been performed from the Space Administration building by a pipe-cleaning crew, which unwittingly acquires a fluffy helper... the doltish night watchman, Whitestorm. But enough of this history.





NEXT: THE STARS OUR DESTINATION!

STORY AND ART BY PAUL NEARY

A STARBURST INTERVIEW WITH JOHN CARPENTER

Last issue John Carpenter talked about *Escape from New York*, *Someone's Watching Me*, *Eyes of Laura Mars* and his life in general. This month, in the second and final part of the interview, he speaks to Tony Crawley about his future projects including *The Thing* and *Halloween II*.



Top: Snake Plissken (Kurt Russell) runs from the World Trade Centre during his mission to bring *The President* out of Manhattan State Penitentiary. *Escape from New York*. Above: Director John Carpenter. Left: A portrait of Kurt Russell as Snake Plissken.

For a film-maker so steeped in old movies, the fact that John Carpenter is due to re-make one of his eternal favourites still rather shocks me. No surprise about the golden oldie he's chosen—it's *The Thing* (1951), the one watched by the baby-sat kids in *Halloween*, oblivious of the mounting terror around them.

But re-makes are anathema to me. And Carpenter reads this, or some of it, in my question about *The Thing* project. "You're surprised I'd even try to make that again?" he asks.

Yes, I am, I tell him. Considering his great love of Howard Hawks, chief among his

notable influences as a director after Hitchcock, Welles, Bunuel and a touch or two (fortunately, not the sentimental touches) of Ford, I would have presumed that Carpenter would rather buy the rights of the 1951 movie and re-release it himself, and make sure it was seen as often as possible.

He nods. "Well, about two years ago now, the producers—Universal own *The Thing*—bought the RKO rights to the film, and David Foster and Larry Turman asked me if I'd like to make it. I re-read the short story by John W. Campbell Jr called *Who goes there?* I don't know if you're familiar with the story...? Well, the book is completely different to

what Howard Hawks did with it. "It's one of my favourite films. But not all of it is my favourite Hawks. It gets off in some funny places—like the girl. There's a whole scene when the hero's handcuffed and he talks to her, and it's real cutey stuff. But I can see why the film is completely different to the book. It's a very complex but fascinating monster story and a tremendous challenge to try and do the book.

"*The Thing* is not a humanoid in the story. It's described as having nine eyes and worms coming out of it. It's a giant glob-monster-type thing. But the essential difference is what the creature does... it assumes the physical identity of its victims. And I've never seen that done in a movie before. A fascinating idea."

And, as it happens, this concept is not entirely new to Carpenter. After *Dark Star*, he and Dan O'Bannon were preparing a film called *They Bite*. Their creature was a prehistoric insect which also aped its victims biologically...

So you re-read the book and said Yes—yes? "I agreed to do *The Thing*, if I didn't have to write it. I didn't feel I could do that, just as I'd never try the male camaraderie thing the way Hawks did it... you know what I'm saying? So, we hired William Lancaster. He's Burt Lancaster's son and a tremendous writer. He wrote *The Bad News Bears* (1976)."

That hardly sounds a worthwhile reference

"Well, I've read half of the script at this time, he's not finished yet, and it is... incredible! I'd like to shoot it with a big star, shoot it in the Arctic and really go for it... But I'm not really answering your question: Why re-do *The Thing*? Well, it just seems like the right thing to do. There's certain elements in the set-up of people stuck in the Arctic that appeals to me."

Isolation is your trademark?

"I like people in isolation... Anyway, I think *The Thing* is the king of the monster movies and it'd be fun to try it." But we hadn't exhausted the subject of Carpenter's remake of *The Thing*.

Starburst: As such a Hawks fan, wouldn't you prefer your version to be named after the book?

Carpenter: Oh no! *The Thing* is the greatest title of them all.

But you're also working on others... *El Diabolo* comes first. What will a Carpenter Western be like? Hawksian again, no doubt. You edited *Assault on Precinct 13*—an urban ghetto *Rio Bravo*, anyway—as John T. Chance, which was John Wayne's name in the Hawks film. You said once on BBC-TV that you'd like the film-making clock to have stopped round the 50s, the era of *Red River*, *Rio Bravo*—or not later than Hawks sequels with Wayne, *El Dorado* and *Rio Lobo*. And isn't *El Diabolo* an anagram of both film titles... (He smiles)

It's more like *The Searchers*, in fact. A revenge story. With some gothic elements, in it. A traditional Western because I don't think Westerns need to be anything else than... Westerns.

Well, you should have, you made an sf Western at 14—*Terror from Space*, full of cowboys, indians and aliens... I love Westerns! Always have, since very young. It's the good guys vs the bad guys. It's always life or death on the line. I guess it goes back to Homer and the Iliad—all Westerns kinda spring out of that. It's an American tradition, the only one we have. But the genre has been beaten to death with everybody fiddling around trying to do something different. I call them 'the Beverly Hills westerns'. That's what nearly killed it for me—Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid ►



Above: Snake Pliskens (Kurt Russell) prepares to board the glider that will take him into the New York Penitentiary. Below: Snake helps the President (Donald Pleasence) to climb the wall of the prison.

(1969), av, c,monl

What was the last traditional Western you saw?

Well, if you consider **The Wild Bunch** (1969) revisionist, I'd say **Rio Lobo** (1971) was probably the last traditional Western.

The last Howard Hawks film, too.

Exactly. One of the classics of all time would be Sergio Leone's **Once Upon A Time in the West** (1969). [And he does, incidentally, give out titles and dates like that, parentheses and all] That is maybe one of the greatest movies of all time. But I wouldn't want to copy Leone, I wouldn't dare to try his whole thing of the cowboy stepping into close-up, the sounds he uses, or the music...

PROMETHEUS CRISIS

Although minus any poster, your name was being banded around also two years ago for another film: **The Prometheus Crisis**. A kind of **China Syndrome** for real. That's one project that's got away. What happened... apart from **China Syndrome**, of course? It's a long story and a kinds interesting one. Before **The China Syndrome** came out in 1979, a full year or so before, when no one knew anything about nuclear power. I was asked [by producers George Braunstein and Ron Hamady] to do **The Prometheus Crisis**—a disaster novel written by the same people who wrote **The Towering Inferno** (Thomas N. Scottia and Frank M. Robinson). I'd always wanted to do a nuclear disaster movie, because of a book called **Nerves** by Lester Delray, back in the '40s. I got all excited and these producers said, "We'll have \$4-million for you as a budget." It turned out, they didn't.

TOTAL RECALL

Another project now missing from your schedule is Dan O'Bannon's **Total Recall**. I thought you two were pals again. I really like the script, very exciting, very human too, one of Dan's best. Like a James Bond in the future. It would cost a lot and the only reason I'm not doing it is, well, I've got all these other things...

HALLOWEEN II

What's your connection, if any, with the **Halloween** sequel?

I'm not going to direct it. The distributors have asked me to executive produce it. And as part and parcel of that, there's a chance I may get my friend Tommy Wallace—my art director on **The Fog**, **Halloween** and **Assault**—to direct it. If that's possible, then I'll exec it—just to get my friend in there.

No other reason...

Well, the only other reason to do it is just to see if there's anyway to make it more frightening. You know what I'm saying? It's almost like an exercise. Could we go further with it? Not just the same thing again.

OTHER PEOPLE'S FILMS

Do you still try to see every movie you can as you did as a kid?

I see a lot... In Los Angeles, we have the Z channel, which is cable television. It has new movies all the time. So, at night, when I come home from work, I'll sit and watch something. I've seen some amazing things.

Adrienne Barbeau: [from the sidelines] He's watching movies all the time! Or he runs movies, himself. Non-stop.



Above: A scene from one of Adrienne Barbeau's favourite movies, Henri-Georges Clouzot's **The Fiends** (Les Diaboliques). Below: A still from the film that almost single-handedly began the whole "stalk-and-slash" school of movie-making — **Halloween**.

John: [Laughs] She doesn't like old movies.

Adrienne: I'm learning!

You have to, I guess.

Adrienne: Right! We've made some adjustments because we're very dissimilar in our personalities, in our hobbies. If he's running something I don't want to see, I just go off and do... whatever. But I do watch sometimes. What did we watch the other day?

John: **Dirty Harry** (1971)

Adrienne: Well, that wasn't an old movie, I guess. But I watched **Diabolique** with you. The Henri-Georges Clouzot film **The Fiends** 1955?

Adrienne: Yes.

With the corpse rising up out of the bath!

Adrienne: Yes, yes! I needed to see that in preparation for another project I'm working on. **Hell Hath No Fury** [for the couple's his 'n' hers company, more hers than his, it seems,

as its named Hye Whitebread Productions

"and that's Armenian like my mother."]

You're a tough critic, John. You've often

knocked your superstar rivals...

What I hate worst is pretension. In any form.

I'll only knock 'em when they become auteurs

in big quotes. When no one can tell them their

work really stinks... that it doesn't work.

There's a tyranny about success. All of a

sudden, people give you everything. Except

the truth. They'll never look at a film, or a

scene, not even at an idea and say straight

out: "You know, that's really a dumb idea."

Do I gather we are talking about 1941 or

Heaven's Gate?

If I ever get there, then I'll be in trouble... I

always have people around me saying,

"That's really bad!" They will always tell me

what's wrong. "That's the stupidest thing I've

ever heard of in my life." Oh...? Okay, thank

you very much. I value that... honesty.





Above: John Carpenter poses with Adrienne Barbeau, Jamie Lee Curtis and Janet Leigh while on location shooting *The Fog*. Below: A tense moment from John Carpenter's brilliant exploitation movie *Assault on Precinct 13*.

So let's hear some of those views. *Star Wars*, say?

Very good. But not great. Some of it was so poor, it just showed how starved people were for that kind of fun and adventure.

True. Close Encounters... the 6th, first edition!

I didn't care for it. He lost control of it. Any great work, even if it's flawed, must have the director's authority stamped on it. No, I prefer their earlier films: *American Graffiti* and *Jaws*.

And... *Alien*?

Well, I know the fella who wrote *Alien*. Or the first draft.

Of course you do.

Because I'd worked with Dan O'Bannon on *Dark Star*... I had mixed feelings about *Alien*. I thought some of it was very powerful. It was not frightening at all to me. It was... repulsive in some ways.

Thoroughly nasty, in fact.

Nasty, right. Nasty little thing. But it wasn't scary. It was re-make of a film which I'm very fond of. It—*The Terror From Beyond Space*, with Marshall Thompson in 1958.

[John Carpenter, as I've hinted at earlier, is one of the few directors I've met who can recount film titles, years and stars like that—rather like Eric the film buff in *Fade to Black*, which just happened to be produced by Braunstein and Hamady, the pair who wanted Carpenter to make *Prometheus Crisis*. Are they trying to tell us something...?]

And, well, I'd rather have seen it—*The Terror From Beyond Space* again. But *Alien* had a tremendous production design. But it was... kinda boring! It fell apart completely at the end. But it was a grrrrreat monster. And the stomach thing and everything... great stuff. And other British films—totally British, that is...



Well, those *Quatermass* movies of yours are some of my favourite movies of all time, you know. I love them. I love Nigel Kneale. You know whom I'm talking about?

Is Bowling Green in Kentucky?

Right!

But we saw all the *Quatermass*es on television first.

Were they better on tv?

They scared the bejibbers out of people... and they didn't have Brian Donlevy shuffling around—on wheels.

Oh, I don't think he was bad. But I saw them first as film. I understand *Quatermass* and the Pit (1967) was probably the best—the one with the underground spaceship.

HOLLYWOOD LIFE

With *The Fog* you joined forces with one of the newer major Hollywood companies. You've now made two movies in a row for Avco Embassy. How free were you in terms of your contract?

Complete creative control. Which is one of the reasons I've stayed with them. They're an independent company, not really a major. But they've an organisation similar to a major, in the sense that they have a real distribution arm and so forth. They've been excellent to me.

You're switching soon to EMI and then, Universal. But for one film at a time, I notice. Still wary of the majors?

Yes. Only in the sense that I don't think they will give me complete control. I want to control my own work—that's all. But inflation is now so crazy in our country—though not as crazy as here in Europe—that if you make a big film for a major, they say, "Fine, you can direct. You can even have your first cut, fella. Then, we'll cut it!" And they'd never let me do the music.

Avco Embassy let me do all of that. They have to approve my stories, of course. I don't walk in and say, "This is what I'm gonna do—it's a story about a closet and we'll be in the closet for an hour..." or where the fog is the central character, or where Manhattan is one gigantic prison. I give them a fuller account. But they don't see my storyboards, or my rushes. They can—but they don't have the absolute right to see them.

FUTURE

You have, what was it, three movies to make in the next year or so? Are you managing to make them fast enough? I mean, John, can you keep up with your own prolificacy?

I'm gonna start to slow down a little bit, because in the last three years I've been incredibly prolific. Four movies in two years at one point. At the end of *The Fog* I found myself totally exhausted. And not having enough fun. So I've decided to approach it a little differently. Each film is going to take as long as it takes and as much as it costs to make. I'm not going to do a film on a low budget anymore, just to do another low budget film, you know what I'm saying?

I know.

The Fog took longer than I thought it would, because of the complicated special effects. I should have done *El Diabolo* before *Escape From New York*. It's just gonna have to be after...

I raised the question because there isn't one other very special, very secret Carpenter project in the wings of your Avco deal: *Without a Trace*?

[Big smile]

Do you mean: No comment?

Well, I can't really discuss that one at the moment for various reasons.

You don't want it to wind up as a tele-movie of

the week! But hasn't it got some science fiction er... traces. Like US government experiments in invisibility...

[Bigger smile] Some.

[Carpenter has since reported scrapping the project. 'I couldn't come up with a third act,' he has said]

So as I asked before, have you enough time to make all your movies?

I have ideas that will keep me going for the rest of my career. It all depends, of course, to be realistic, if I make films that make money, that appeal to the public, that people go to see... you know what I'm saying? First and foremost, my films are for the audience. Not for critics, if you'll excuse me... And not for my friends either, although I'm happy to have all their views.

Good! If only a few other whizz-kids would understand that.

So as long as I can make films that people will go and see, I'll be happy.

So, John, will we!



CORRECTION.

Among the finished projects listed in my *Carpenter File*, *Sterburst 22*, was the NBC-tv-movie, *Better Late Than Never* (1979), described as being "written (with producer Debra Hill) and directed by John Carpenter." It didn't pan out that way... Debra was not connected with the tv venture; only Carpenter's script (about senior citizens in revolt) survived, with added input by co-executive producer Greg Strangis, and the 120-minute result was directed by actor Richard Crenna. Badly. The cast remains as listed before, with, interestingly enough, Donald Pleasence as a final addition.

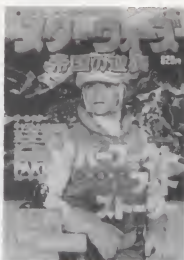


Above: Isaac Hayes plays *The Duke*, the toughest inmate of the New York Penitentiary. Above left: Snake Plissken (Kurt Russell) is injected with a dose of "antibodies" by a doctor of the United States Police Force. Left: The special effects crew of *Escape From New York* poses with some of the models for the long distance shots of the Manhattan skyline. Dennis Shotak is seen at centre, Bob Shotak is sitting on the right.

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it's only a movie

There I was browsing happily through **Starburst 35**, to see if my name had been spelt correctly, when my eye was caught by a photograph on page 55. "Yuch," I exclaimed, "Who is that? He looks like Atilla the Slug." Well, friends, you can imagine my shock and horror when I looked at the caption below the photograph and saw that it was *me*. The magazine fell from nerveless fingers and I rushed to the nearest mirror to reassure myself that I didn't look like something from **Plan 9 from Outer Space**. Thankfully I saw that I was my usual noble and intelligent-looking self and realized the photograph must have been some dreadful accident due to a defective camera or something. (See photograph on this page for the *real me*.)

Naturally I was eager to discuss the situation with my good friend John Bowles, who supplied the photograph, and as luck would have it, a few days later I found myself on the same train with him travelling up to Birmingham to attend the 10th Anniversary Party of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group. "John," I said calmly as I held him out of the window (having first used his head to shatter the glass), "I am not amused."

"Arghhh," he replied, then added, "Look, you can run a picture of *me* in your column. That's fair, innit?"

I thought it over, trying to ignore Bowles' struggles as a train heading in the opposite direction rapidly approached us. Finally I nodded and said, "Okay, it's a deal," and started to drag him back into the carriage. Unfortunately, I was a little too slow and the other train sort of... well... hit him. I won't describe the sickening scene that followed but you can see for yourself on this page the results of the accident (the photograph of Bowles is *after* the doctors worked on him). It's okay though—his injuries will not affect the standard of his book reviewing.

The Birmingham SF Group anniversary party, by the way, was a lot of fun and among the guests were Brian Aldiss, Harry Harrison, Christopher Priest and Bob Shaw. Harry Harrison was in particularly high spirits, having the day before finalised a deal with two film producers who intend to make a movie of Harry's famous novel *The Stainless Steel Rat*. (And on returning to London I learned that Thomas M. Disch, Guest of Honour at this year's Easter Convention in Leeds, has just sold the film rights to his novel *On Wings of Song*.)

The occasion was such a success, in fact, that organiser Roger Peyton told me that they were going to have a Tenth Anniversary Party every year from now on...

Speaking, as we were earlier, about disagreements among **Starburst** contributors it's interesting how rarely we have a unanimous opinion about the movies we see. Recent exceptions have been *Raiders of the Lost Ark*—we all loved it—and *Outland*—we were all less than crazy about it. But usually divisions of opinion are about 50/50 with either Phil Edwards and I agreeing that a film is great or lousy and Alan Jones and our illustrious editor, whatsisname, taking the opposite view. The permutations change, of course. For instance, both Alan Jones and I agreed that *Escape from New York* was a great disappointment while Phil and the other Alan loved it. Occasionally, however, one of us tends to find himself in a complete minority. I was the one around

here who disliked *Excalibur* (see issue 35) and I seem to be the only **Starburst** contributor who enjoyed *Clash of the Titans*.

I don't know, perhaps it's just nostalgia on my part due to all the enjoyment I used to get from Harryhausen's movies back in the late

Below: John Bowles after his unfortunate accident. "I may never play the violin again," he said. Below inset: *The Real* (and very lovely) John Brosnan.



starring John Brosnan



50s and early 60s, but I loved every old-fashioned bone in the film's body. And I also believe that *Clash* is a great improvement on the two *Sinbad* films and the best Harryhausen/Schneer production since *Jason and the Argonauts*. Like the latter film,

Left: No expense spared, Starburst had an eminent surgeon examine John Bowles after the accident. "It will be sometime before he can lead a normal life," he stated.



Clash is also based on Greek mythology but what distinguishes it from *Jason* and Harryhausen's other work is that it's in a much darker vein than usual and more faithful to the spirit of the original Greek myths, the chief message of which seemed to be that the gods were a shifty bunch and not to be trusted (Lord Olivier captures this element perfectly with his portrayal of the fickle and devious Zeus). It would have been the nearest thing to a truly adult fantasy movie that Harryhausen has ever made if it wasn't for the introduction halfway through of that rotten clockwork owl Bubo (short for Bubonic Plague, presumably) who does for *Clash of the Titans* what Nicol Williamson did for *Excalibur*.

Whoever had the bright idea of Bubo, so obviously based on Artoo Deetoo, should be chained to a rock and fed to the first Kraken who happens by. The owl is an appalling invention and destroys the mood of every scene it appears in. All its banal bits of "cute business" were copyrighted by Cheeta the Chimp in the *Tarzan* movies years ago. It does every corny routine except wink at the camera when the hero and heroine are kissing.

But a big plus in *Clash* is Harry Hamlin as the hero Perseus. It's been the custom in the Harryhausen/Schneer movies to feature some handsome waxwork model in the lead who usually has trouble in walking and talking at the same time and is generally less animated than the monsters but young Hamlin is not only good looking but he can actually act. He succeeds in breathing life into what is essentially a dull character and on the strength of this performance should go far (if he hasn't already—one has to remember that it is almost three years since the live action for *Titans* was shot. Perhaps he has since retired from the film business and become a poultry farmer. And by the way, whatever happened to Todd Armstrong, the star of *Jason*?)

Okay, the optical effects were ropey at times (very ropey) but Harryhausen's model animation was as good as ever and better integrated into the story this time. Some sequences worked better than others—the fight between Perseus and the Medusa is destined to become a classic while the final confrontation with the Kraken was a bit of a let-down—but all the animation was of a consistently high standard and I can't understand the comments of the *Variety* reviewer who said the creatures seemed to be "rehashes from B-pictures". But then the same reviewer said *Clash* is "... an unbearable bore of a film that will probably put to sleep the few adults stuck taking the kids to it." The guy obviously has no sense of wonder. *Clash of the Titans* may seem dated compared to the sort of stuff being produced by George Lucas, Steven Spielberg etc, but it is by no means a failure. And it's certainly superior to pretentious twaddle like *Excalibur*.

And finally, a message to all those people who have been writing in to complain that they can't find the wires on the photograph printed in issue 34 (page 47). I confess it was my little joke—the man in the picture sitting at the desk was the one really in the horizontal position. The chair and the desk were nailed to the wall and he was strapped in. The picture was then taken, of course, with the camera lying on its side.

book world

There is a select handful of science fiction writers who are bankable in the same way that certain filmmakers are bankable: publishers know that their name on a project virtually ensures its commercial success. Stephen King, for instance, is very very bankable, though he isn't generally associated with sf as such. Asimov, Bradbury, Clarke and Heinlein are bankable, so, to a lesser extent, are Farmer, McCaffrey, La Guin, Niven and (in Britain, at least) Moorcock. Frank Herbert is very bankable, and when a new project includes that magic word "Dune" in the title, it becomes just about the most desirable property of all.

Herbert's latest novel *God Emperor of Dune* (Gollancz, £6.95), has already, in commercial terms, outstripped its predecessors in the USA. The figures are impressive: approaching three months on the national bestseller lists, almost always in one of the top three places; 200,000 copies in print in hardcover. Things have come a long way since *Dune* was first published in 1965 in a small edition by a fairly obscure American publisher (the major companies weren't interested; they knew that such a long science fiction novel wasn't commercially viable). Copies of that first edition can now fetch up to \$1000—it's that rare—while the book has gone on to sell countless millions of copies around the world, becoming in the process perhaps the single most famous modern science fiction novel.

Herbert spent a few days in London recently, helping to publicize *God Emperor of Dune* with interviews and signing sessions. I took the opportunity to talk with him about his career in general and the *Dune* books in particular.

After completing his education at the University of Washington in Seattle, Herbert went into journalism, a career he followed until he eventually became a full-time writer. He worked as a reporter in a wide range of capacities: "General assignment, rewrite, copy-editor, feature-editor, photographer." I was finally assistant news editor on the major daily in San Francisco when I realized that I had a choice: either do that or write. That was about 15 years ago.

He made the decision there and then and has never looked back. He already had many years of fiction writing experience behind him, having sold his first stories in the late 1940s, and having made his debut as a science fiction writer in 1952. Once he had started writing as he largely stuck to it in preference to other forms of fiction (though one later novel, *Soul Catcher*, is a contemporary study of the clash between the traditional American Indian culture and that of the modern USA). He explains the preference for sf succinctly: "elbow room." In other words, the freedom to develop and explore ideas. Short stories appear not to have offered him sufficient elbow-room, and he did not really begin to establish his name until he turned to novels. His first, known alternatively as *Under Pressure* (this preferred title) or *The Dragon in the Sea*, is a fast-paced psychological thriller set on board a submarine during a future war. It remains, along with *Soul Catcher*, the novel which Herbert chooses as a personal favourite among his work. His second was *Dune*, the first magazine serial version of which appeared in 1963. It was followed by *Dune Messiah*, *Children of Dune* and by the new book. I asked how much planning and preparation had gone into the book.

"Well, there was six years of research, thought, I was also doing other things, of course. Then about a year and a half of writing. I saw the *Dune* trilogy as one book—absolutely unphable, of course. In fact, had parts of the second two written before the first was completed, but as I wrote I felt I had to get more material, do more research and flesh them out more than I had at first, certainly."

Dune is perhaps the supreme example of what has come to be known among science fiction critics as "worldcraft": the building of a complete alien world, with its own geography, history, biology and ecology. The planet Dune, or Arrakis is the real star of the book—a desert world, inhabited by gigantic sandworms and by a human population, the Fremen, who survive by scrupulous preservation of every precious drop of moisture. How did Herbert go about building this detailed and convincing environment?

"I had two concepts riding on me at the time. One was a book about the messianic complex in human society—why do we follow a leader? While I was doing this I was fishing around for a setting at a town called Florance, Oregon, where the US Department of Agriculture was controlling sand dunes by plantation and other techniques, and I got caught by the concept of how we inflict ourselves on the planet, and what we can do about it. What is the time-frame within which these things happen? I started researching that and in the process, saw that the two went together."

The messiah in *Dune* is the reluctant figure of Paul Atreides, who resists the role because he has prescient visions which show bloody religious wars following his acclamation. It is this reluctance on the part of the protagonist to fulfil what appears to be an inevitable destiny which gives the novel part of its strength. The ecological transformation of the desert planet, Herbert's other original idea, is only seen over the course of the first three novels, and inevitably has given rise to some disappointment among readers that the desert world itself does not feature so strongly after the first book. But as Herbert points out, there is always some possible objection to sequels: either the author is accused of repetition, or, if the sequel is different, of depriving the reader of the chance to relive the original experience. Herbert took the second, and more dangerous course, but the continuing success of the sequels suggests that he has managed to keep his audience. The latest, *God Emperor of Dune* was not part of the original plan. "It came about because I'd created a character who wouldn't let go of me: Leto II. The whole idea of the human and the monster in one flesh kept fascinating me, and the idea of an empire, a society, a civilization, that's under the control of one dominant figure all those millennia. What kind of society evolves out of that? I wanted to play that imaginative game, so I went back to it.

At the end of *Children of Dune*, Leto—Paul's son—achieves a kind of symbiotic fusion with the larval stage of the sandworm, and in doing so acquires super-powers. *God Emperor* begins three thousand years later, with Leto still ruling the human galaxy, but by this time transformed into a half-human half-sandworm creature. It's a compelling image, and the book seems sure to enjoy the same popularity as its predecessors. The ending offers intriguing possibilities for further *Dune* novels, a possibility which Herbert does not rule out. "I have no aversion to it. I have no story in mind at the moment. If the mood strikes me, I'll get an idea and I think it would make a good story, then I'll do it, but I'm not playing the 'God, I've got to do another Sherlock Holmes story' game."

The possibility of a *Dune* movie has approached and receded several times over the years. I asked Herbert about the history of the project. "Arthur P. Jacobs bought it around 1972 and then Jacobson and Amec, the corporation sold it to French group who hired John Wasky to do it. Then for lots of adverse reason's they dropped it. They didn't know what they had, really. I was in the contract as technical advisor but they never asked me—which was originally a big mistake, but then I wasn't

too interested in what they were doing anyway. It was obvious that Alejandro was going to do a horsepiss the Pope story!"

The book was subsequently resold to Dino De Laurentis, who passed off half of it to Universal. Ridley Scott was brought in to direct but, according to Herbert, had rather different ideas as to what the movie should be. "Ridley said to me that he wanted to do an incest picture. Paul and Jessica."

Jessica is Paul's mother, and there's certainly no hint of incest in the novel. Did Herbert know why Ridley Scott wanted to turn *Dune* into a film about incest, and what was his reaction to the idea? "I just walked away. I didn't do any great breast-beating or shouting; that tends not to achieve anything in the movie industry. I don't know why he wanted to do it, well, if you look at Ridley's movies I have yet to see a real human relationship in them. Maybe he doesn't want to get into it. He does tend to go for shock value; that's one of the *schnicks* he's riding. Maybe he thinks it's the only way to be successful. I'm not in his head, so I can't say. Yes, this is why he does it. I said to him that there would be a lot of disappointed people, but I didn't make any big argument about it because I had no control. I had influence—and I don't know whether that influence was substantially effective in the fact that Ridley's no longer the director. I'm in those high-level decision making conferences."

Meanwhile the film got nowhere. "They started working on a script. Then Ridley got other things to do, then his option expired. Now they have David Lynch and David, as far as I'm concerned, is an ideal choice. Number one, above all the others, he's a *Dune* fan, so he wants to do the book. And what he did with *The Elephant Man* shows that he can. He has that translator's ability—superbly, I think. He has a good team. The thing that's been holding it up is the Writer's Guild strike. When that's over, I would imagine in a month to six weeks we'll have a script. I wrote a script quite a while ago which they have. It's a tool, but some parts of it may survive."

The technical problems will be formidable, particularly the convincing rendition of a sandworm—a creature so large that, fully-grown, its mouth is the size of a football pitch. A mixture of model and sectional mock-up will almost certainly be used to create it on screen. Design is also important, and here Herbert hopes to involve American artist John Schoenherr, who illustrated the original magazine serials and later did the paintings for the *Dune Calendar*, in the project. One must hope he succeeds, for all the visual renditions so far Schoenherr's is indisputably the most effective.

Herbert was also involved for a while in *Flash Gordon*: he spent six weeks at Pinewood working on the script while Nicholas Hoag was still the director. He hasn't seen the finished product, so has no idea if any elements of his work survived. It is interesting (and frustratingly) to speculate on what their collaboration might have been like.

Finally, with the next appointment of a busy schedule looming, I asked Herbert his opinion of *Star Wars*, since many people have pointed out some resemblances between its desert planet sequences and *Dune*. "I think some story came up with 16 points of exact comparison, and that cannot be chance. I belong to a small select group including Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle and several others, who set down at a table one time and agreed that we were going to form a club called *We Will Not Sue Star Wars*. The fascinating thing to me is that the *Star Wars* people went after Bettelheim's *Goldfinger* on the basis that the creative artist's work ought to belong to the creative artist, which I thought was very amusing in the circumstances."

by john bowles

GOD EMPEROR OF DUNE

FRANK HERBERT



TV ZONE

The telephone can sometimes be a deadly weapon—especially when down the line comes the growling voice of editor Alan McKenzie saying something to the effect of "Do you know what the date is? Where's that copy for the next TV Zone?"

However, this time it wasn't all venom 'n' vitriol and I got off lightly by just being skinned alive. Following my lump excuses for being late once again we bounced around a few possible ideas for upcoming tv feature articles. As a result our thoughts drifted to the

spy-show genre.

Mmm, *Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, maybe? What do you think of *Wild Wild West*, uh? Mmmm, maybe. Hey, how about *Mission: Impossible*, eh? Mmmm, maybe we could do something there. Then, of course, we ran off into the old "Do you remember that episode where ... ?" and that was that. But, it could be that eventually I'll be taking a shot at doing something on *Man from U.N.C.L.E.* and *Mission: Impossible*. And possibly sometime in the future something on *Wild Wild West* (one of my favourite pieces of bizarre lunacy on tv).

Sadly though, one of the great problems facing tv journalists on this side of the Atlantic is that most tv programmes are not readily available for viewing. And I mean viewing in the sense that if an author wanted to re-evaluate a feature movie, be it *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951) or *Planet of the Apes* (1968), he could acquire a print from a 16mm distributor and run it at his pleasure. No such thing for television—as a lot of convention organisers/programmers have found out. If you want to check out a copy or copies of tv shows on 16mm (or even tape) it is very difficult to get the material (unless of course you have a black market source).

Consider American tv shows, for example. Something like 90% of filmed American tv still exists and is, in a sense, available for screening. The material exists in major tv company/network vaults situated in various parts of the world. There is, for instance, a major distribution point in Europe which serves the "Western Hemisphere", or something like that, with syndicated American tv shows. It serves Portuguese tv if they want 233 episodes of *Have Gun-Will Travel* or German tv if they want 140 *Twilight Zones*. What they don't serve is the individual, the convention organiser or the author who wants to view a small selection. However, if the BBC wanted to screen all 110 episodes of *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* then it is along this source that the prints would come.

In other words, you would have to invent a tv station (and maybe a country to go with it) in order to view any part of television history.

All of this brings me back to the problems facing those who want to use twenty-year-old tv shows for educational reasons, for author's research, or simply for fan activity purposes. Even if you manage to battle your way through the 'red tape' of print availability—which shouldn't really involve much more than the date required, the quantity, and the cost of transit—there's the stickier, tougher world of copyright, union agreements and residual payments.

Let's run a possible format here. The editor calls and agrees that a piece on, say, *Mission: Impossible* would be a good idea.

You look up your old notes and jottings on the show and find that there isn't enough to work on. You need to see a lot of this stuff again because your memory isn't what it used to be.

You find out who the syndication distributor is (in England) and call them. You have a limited list of episodes that you'd like to view and can they arrange for prints to be made available? You explain why you want to see them, what it's for, etc.

They tell you that their distribution agreement restricts them from allowing the



This spread: A selection of scenes from the theatrical feature *One of Our Spies is Missing*, compiled by editing together episodes of the tv series *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*, which starred Robert Vaughn as Napoleon Solo and David McCallum as Illya Kuryakin.

material to be screened "direct projection" (that is, the material can be shown via television transmission but not directly onto a movie-screen in a theatre). You have to have it cleared through various other parties before they'll let you have prints.

Now this is a whole new basket of snakes. You call the original American producers of the show and somehow convince them it's all for a worthy cause—that it may also open up a new commercial avenue for one of their old products. They say that they'll agree only if the Guilds also give their permission.

So now you're on your way to a £1000 phone-bill. You call the Writers Guild of America and go through the whole routine of *whys* and *what-fors* again. They'll be happy to let you see the material if you clear it with the Directors Guild.

You contact the Directors Guild of America and plead your case. They see no harm in the project and give you an OK—as long as you have it checked and cleared with the Screen Actors Guild. (The Writers and Directors organisations used to be pretty sympathetic to further application of their work because, unlike theatrical films, television material usually has a one-screening lifespan—an obvious point of frustration for the creators).

The Screen Actors Guild (like their British counterpart, Equity) comes across like the Berlin Wall. They have the rights of their members to consider, etc. They can't allow the screening of one episode to go by unless you obtain permission (which they'll advise against) from every single actor/actress in the film and pay them their individual percentage for re-run. This is naturally impossible, as well as ridiculous, and you try to emphasise that the screening would not be a money-making enterprise—just a point of research/study/appreciation.

Still, they're not interested in any element of "further appreciation" and add a final sting by asking you exactly what the Musicians Union had to say.

The Musicians Union? *Oh, no!*

Obviously, the above commando course is very much a generalised sequence of events—but it is based on the experiences of several colleagues who have actually run the course. Needless to say, as a result, they never did get to pass Go or collect their...

Retuning to the writing **Mission:** **Impossible** note, unless you have access to bootleg prints or tapes you have to enter into lengthy, detailed research—involving almost half a decade of *Variety* and *Hollywood Reporter* listings as well as a lot of other sources (including correspondence with key people involved with the series).

Now all this is fine and should be done anyway. That is if you happen to be writing a book on the subject, and you have about two-and-a-half years in which to do it. But a 2-3000-word article which you'd like to see appear before you get much older... Unfortunately, you're forced to cram all this long-way-round research into as many weeks as you can afford, and then hope that a lot of the "un-viewed" material (for which you may have had to depend on other people's contemporary reviews) is not misrepresentative or mis-leading.

Nevertheless, I still intend to go ahead with several possible tv projects, including one on **Man from U.N.C.L.E.** (for which I'm currently exchanging correspondence with the show's

creator-producer-writer, Sam Rolfe).

Along with **Mission: Impossible** I'd eventually like to cover such series as **Wild Wild West**, **The Sixth Sense**, **It's About Time**, **Alfred Hitchcock Presents/Hour**, **The Addams Family**, **The Girl from U.N.C.L.E.** (as

a separate item), and **Randall and Hopkirk**.

Of course, if any tv buff out there has any wonderful ideas, thoughts, views and/or checklists, etc. on these shows I'd be delighted to hear from them (c/o the **Starburst** offices).



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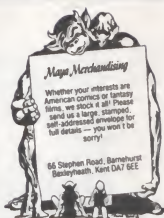
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A Starburst Interview with *JOE DANTE*

Interview by Bill Warren



In Part One of this interview, culled from a 50-page interview *Starburst* Hollywood correspondent Bill Warren conducted in April, Joe Dante discussed the genesis of his interest in science fiction and horror movies, and told about the making of *Piranha*. In Part 2, he talks about a couple of failed projects as well as *The Howling*. Of the young directors working in Hollywood, Joe Dante perhaps has the fewest pretensions about himself, and possibly the surest grasp on just what it is he wants to do. He will be a major figure in films.

Starburst: *Piranha* did very well.

Joe Dante: Yeah, it did fine. Anyway, the producers were happy. It did me a lot of good. I got *Orca 2* out of it, for Dino De Laurentiis, which I eventually talked him out of making, for which the movie-going public owes me a debt of gratitude. Then there was *Jaws 3*, *People O*, which was a big career step for me in that it was a big movie company (Universal), and I got to see how a big company works, which is not entirely that glamorous. I worked on rewriting a script for it that certain people in the big organization thought was hilarious and that other people didn't. It was a mixture of a lot of the wrong people who were already mixed up incorrectly before I got there.

Back in the old days, there would have been one guy.



Top: Two types of monster from Joe Dante films. The mutated piranhas from Dante's second full-length feature, *Piranha* (inset) and one of the werewolves that featured in *The Howling*. Above: Director Joe Dante on the set of *The Howling*.

Back with *Roger Corman* there would have been one guy. And I tell you, the more I find out about how this business works, the more I appreciate Roger. He is a person who may give you an answer you don't agree with, but it is an answer. When you get to a hierarchy situation, you ask a question and it goes up the ladder. You get a "no" and you don't have any idea who to complain to. It's some faceless person you may never meet, you may never know the name of. *Jaws 3* did not work out for various reasons. Its basic problem was that it was an amalgam of *Hollywood Boulevard* and *Piranha*, which is why I was hired to do it. But they decided not to make it, and I think they may have regretted it later. Their rationale was that they wanted to make another serious *Jaws* movie, which they've just given to Alan Landsberg. So how serious can they be about it? But *Jaws 3* is being shot as we speak.

Is this where The Howling came in?

The Howling at that point was an embryo project. It was a werewolf movie, which appealed to me, and Mike Finnell was involved in it. When Allan Arkush got sick for a couple of days, I came in and finished *Rock 'n' Roll High School*, and did some editing. Mike Finnell produced that film, and was a production assistant on *Hollywood Boulevard*. He was going to produce *The Howling* with Dan Blatt, whom I had met on I



Never Promised You a Rose Garden (I recut the end of that film). When *Jaws 3*, *People O* fell through, it turned out that Jack Conrad, the guy who had optioned the novel of *The Howling* and had written a previous script, had gotten himself into a position where Avco-Embassy was worried that maybe he couldn't direct the picture. I think it was because they had read his script, which was slavishly faithful to a book which makes no sense, in addition to dropping the werewolf angle and including people who sent their spirits out to real wolves who were hanging around in the forest.

Did you consider using real wolves?
Briefly. I met a wolf and he didn't like me. The real difficulty was the time problem involved with working with animals on the set. And there's no majesty, no fantasy to using real animals, there's no mystery. It's a real wolf, it's an animal. You could be chased through the woods by a real wolf. You're dealing with someone who's scary while he's changing, and then becomes something that is not scary. That wasn't what we wanted to do. We wanted to do a fantasy, a monster movie.
Why do you do this kind of werewolf as opposed to the Lon Chaney Jr type?
What's the point of doing Lon Chaney Jr if you could still make that kind of film, Hammer Films would never have gone out of business. People have seen it. They'd seen it when Tyburn made *Legend of the Werewolf*, and in this country (*United States*) that could not get released. There is no audience for something that people have seen a million times. I'm not interested in duplicating what Jack Pierce did; Jack Pierce did that kind of thing better. Rob Bottin is really into doing new things.



The things that excited him about Rick Baker and Dick Smith, people he really admires, is that they were doing things with makeup that had never been done before. And that's what Rob wants to do. We had some other projects we wanted to do together, like *Meltdown*. We had a lot of ideas. Contingent on his involvement with *The Howling* was that he would be able to do what he wanted.

Rob designed the werewolf. He went through a lot of different designs, a lot of different sculptures, and ended up basing it consciously or unconsciously on a sort of Frazetta-like image, a *Creepy* cover, of a real wolf standing up on its hind legs. Also from some woodcuts which we found and used in the film.

Whose idea was it to do the transformation in real time?
That was not a specific idea. The idea was that we wanted to change the faces and the shapes of the characters on screen, because we knew that had never been done. Now initially we wanted to do it all in one shot. We wanted to do a great transformation scene where a naked woman turns into a werewolf, right? Well, that proved to be beyond our capabilities. Now Rick Baker was initially involved in this, too, but Rick suddenly remembered that he promised John Landis, who'd been his friend for years, that he was going to do *his* picture, which was now about to go into preproduction. So Rick ended up being our consultant, and Rob would often check ideas with him.

Originally, Rob built a giant werewolf puppet, which operated with rods like a Muppet, and it proved to be unwieldy. At the last minute, we used a combination of a suit,

worn by Jeff Shank, and fake legs which Rob built. Rob wanted to play Eddie Quist, the main werewolf, but he wouldn't have had the time to make the stuff that he made if he played a part in the movie. Also, he wouldn't have been able to tell us what he thought of the way it was looking, because he would have been inside it. On this film, he had a lot of input into the lighting of the special effect scenes. I don't think he's had that kind of power on any other picture.

You used the word "majesty," and that's certainly the effect I felt in the scene where the werewolf plucks the papers out of Terry's hand. It implies the monster is a thinking being.

I like that, too, but on the set the crew were all clucking and shaking their heads. On the set, it was hysterically funny. It was a tremendous chance to take, to do the file scene the way we did. Rob and I toyed with the idea of having it talk, or almost talk, kind of growlish. If you listen in the movie, we did some of that and mixed it out. We finally thought that that might be just too much.

The beast in that scene is a head suit, with arms, with the head controllable via cables down the back. It could change expression.

I think that scene, in which Terry (*Balinda Balaski*) is killed by the werewolf, is a better scene cinematically than the transformation scene. By having the cartoon there, that Chris (*Dennis Dugan*) is watching, not only is the audience sort of disarmed for a moment, which makes the horror thing work a little better, but there actually is a correlation between the situation that Terry is in and the situation the lamb is in in the cartoon.
What about the transformation scene?



Rob had underestimated how much time a lot of things were going to take. He wanted everything to be perfect. There were short tempers. The transformation scene we imagined would run 30 seconds, ended up running 2½ minutes, stretching credulity.

The scene is in two stages, one in which the actor appears, and one in which the actor goes away, being replaced by one of a series of fake heads that could change. It's very expensive to have an actor in makeup all day, and it was extremely time-consuming to get him to the stages he reached. We were alternating between shooting the heads without the actor, and having the actor come down. Rob had a lot of assistants, but it boiled down to what I've always found: you can't trust someone else to do things, you have to do it yourself to get it right. Which is why I cut my own movies. The technical end of the movie, considering the budget (\$1.8 million) and the time, is remarkable, but it could be better and it will be better in Rick's picture, *An American Werewolf in London*.

Believe it or not, there are some things in it that I don't think are as good as some of the things we didn't use. We shot the hell out of that transformation scene; we had reams and reams of footage of these things, pieces of masks and masks doing various things in various closeups and various camera movements. It got to the point where I was dazed by watching it. I couldn't tell any more, was it better when it went out slowly?

I see both in the picture, because at the end when TC (Don McLeod) transforms, his face pops out quickly.

The TC thing didn't work out very well. That

one shot works, but we shot a whole front view of him which we didn't use because I didn't like the way it looked. That was originally going to be a much more elaborate transformation, but we found just the one piece that worked and put it in. Also, there's no point in making people think you're going to top yourselves if that's not your intention. If I had it to do over, I would do a lot of it very differently. I didn't like the love scene; it was the one thing we took out of the book that I never liked. We shot it very quickly, in like two hours. It's too long; it was left long under pressure to have a sex scene in the picture. There are things in the movie that I don't like, but there are more things that I do like.

A lot of people have said that there are too many gags in The Howling.

Yeah, a lot of people haven't liked the fact that there's so much humour in it. Now, *The Invisible Man* is one of my favourite movies. James Whale switches second-by-second from comedy to horror; one minute *The Invisible Man* is stealing somebody's bicycle, the next he's knocking over a baby carriage. One minute he's throwing ink at the policeman, the next he's smashing in his head with a stool.

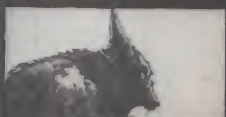
One of my favourites is the Frederic March Jekyll & Hyde, in which Hyde is funny and scary at the same time, for the same reasons. Yes that's very daring. The cut from Karen (Dee Wallace) to the dog food commercial could be construed as a cheap laugh. There are other cheap laughs in The Howling, but I didn't think of that as one. To me, rather than reducing her sacrifice, like you felt, it puts it in a context that makes it somewhat more poignant, because it's a sacrifice that's being



CUT TO PHONE



CUT TO CLOSEUP OF HER



CUT TO (VERY TIGHT) HER REACTION



WEREWOLF LEANS FORWARD TO BITE HER NECK - CUT



perceived by the television audience on the same level as the dog food commercial. The very medium that Karen has been trained to believe is the medium of truth is the medium that people out there don't believe in because it's been abused so often. Very few people get any of that out of the picture, but it is there. To me, one of the best things about the whole movie is that Eddie (Robert Picardo) isn't just a werewolf, he's a homicidal maniac who's a werewolf.

Eddie is crazy enough that he would do almost anything. Rob calls him the Charles Manson of werewolves.

I noticed that the worst werewolves are all siblings, the Quist family.

I don't think this is brought out, but they're the ones who may be natural, born werewolves. All the others are people who were human beings who have had to adjust to what is like a disease that they've caught. And all those people are trying to fool themselves into thinking they can still be what they were and also be werewolves. Marsha (Elisabeth Brooks), Eddie and TC realize that this is what they are; it's not good, it's not bad, it's just what they are. The interesting movie that could have been made, which wasn't made, is about Eddie. He was sold a bill of goods by the doctor, apparently. Eddie's gone to the city and tried to fit in, but hasn't been able to do so, not able to control himself, and he's gone crazy from the city. Now that's an interesting story. Why isn't the picture about that? Because Eddie isn't in the book, that's why. At least we fixed the doctor (Patrick MacNee) so he wasn't as boring as he was in the book, but in fixing him, we implied so much more about him. Why is he doing this?

Is he a werewolf, is he not a werewolf? I think he is, myself, and so did Patrick MacNee.

One of the story problems is that you don't really know why Doc Waggoner sent Karen to the colony.

He implied that at the end, but I cut it out. "I had to find out if she saw Eddie change in the booth". But that's an extremely lame motivation. One of the things I learned at New World is that you don't spend time on things you think are weaknesses in the film. You just try to cover up weak scenes, weak actors.

Piranha was 80% camouflage. The Howling is only 40% camouflage, but a lot still is camouflage. A lot is cutting from something so they don't see what you want them to not see. Directing a movie is not just directing the actors, it's directing the audience. There are ways of cutting stupid lines of dialogue so you won't get a laugh with them; if you cut away from the person talking to the person reacting, on a specific syllable. You can avoid getting a laugh if you're clever enough, but the trick is to spot it soon, which is why you have early screenings.

About the future. More horror movies?

I like horror movies, but as we all know, this cycle is breathing its last. Whatever money this picture makes is going to be on the basis of being a monster movie. Maniac is now what people think a horror movie is. People have forgotten that these pictures used to be about bigger worlds than ours and larger-than-life situations and imagination. Now these pictures prey on urban paranoia, and endless brutality, and different ways to dismember the human body. The Howling has suffered more from that, by being lumped in with these pictures. Word will get

around if it stays in the theatre.

I think the only hope is fantasy. The Star Wars audience, The Empire Strikes Back audience, they like to be scared, but they also like to be amused, and they like to be thrilled, and they like to be amazed. And The Howling does have some amazing things in it, which I think is its strength. The trick is to convince people that it's a monster movie, a return to form, and not a picture where you have to close your eyes every five minutes because somebody's getting their fingers cut off.

Do you think the classic horror movie is dead? No, I don't think so. I think you could do an expensive Frankenstein, even though the play was a flop on Broadway. But I don't want to do the Hammer thing, I don't want to go through the Universal book page by page, and make a great mummy movie.

Do you have any other projects in mind?

I like a script by Peter S. Beagle, Trick or Treat. It's weird, it's offbeat, it's Bradburyian. I'd like to do John Brunner's The Sheep Look Up, which I'm afraid is such a depressing novel that it would clear the theatre. I was also offered a story, Claw, by Philip K. Dick. It's interesting, but it takes place in a post-atomic war era, and I find that to be a turnoff. I'll probably do this EC comics picture. David Cronenberg has been writing the story, which I kind of like. Walter Hill, Cronenberg and I would each direct a segment.

Do you want to continue making horror pictures?

I love horror pictures, but if I get myself tired, I'll find myself out of work. People are tired of the killer-with-a-knife type of thing. I'd like to stay in the fantasy genre, although I'd like to make all kinds of movies.



Right: T.C. Oust (Don McLeod) begins his transformation into a werewolf. Below: Greg Cannon applies latex over Robert Picard's mask. Bladders under the skin will make Picard's skin appear to ripple. Below right: Director Joe Dante examines one of Rob Bottin's mechanical heads, used in the transformation scenes. Thanks to design, direction and John Hora's photography the cuts between the real face and heads are very smooth. Bottom: Terry (Belinda Balaski) is attacked by a werewolf.



RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK

Director Stephen Spielberg chats with actors Harrison Ford and Karen Allen during a break in the filming of the spectacular climactic scene of the new Lucasfilm production, Raiders of the Lost Ark.

